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European Security Interests and the Greek-Turkish Conflict:  
Transforming Old Antagonists into an Archetype of Intercultural Détente

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European Security Interests and the Greek-Turkish Conflict:  
Transforming Old Antagonists into an Archetype of Intercultural Détente

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SUPERVISING COMMITTEE:

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## **Dedication**

This thesis is dedicated to my loving wife of 11 years, Renda, and my two beautiful daughters, Chelsea and Megan, whose patience and loving support made this endeavor all the more worthwhile.

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Tensions between Greece and Turkey have continued publicly since the 1920's and aside from a few occasions where these two Aegean adversaries nearly came to blows, Western powers have largely discounted this enduring conflict. In the post-Cold War era however, with the West facing a startling resurgence of ethno-religious conflicts from the Balkans to Central Asia, this lingering intercultural feud has assumed new relevance. As NATO and the UN struggle to keep a series of regional instabilities from breaking out into even wider wars, they stumble for lack of a coherent strategy to fit a changed global environment. Rather than simply deploying troops to enforce Dayton Accord-style ethnic partitions, Western powers should seek to establish a more permanent peace by constructing exemplars of inter-ethnic and religious harmony. Greece and Turkey are uniquely prepared to become just such an exemplar. Specifically, by offering Turkey a path to EU membership, Europe has the means to begin a process that will ultimately transform these old adversaries into a powerful intercultural model for regional stability. On behalf of Western security interests and their own future prosperity and stability, the EU must seize this opportunity.

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## Introduction



**Figure 0.1:**  
Archbishop of Cyprus  
Makarios III (Top),  
Serbian President  
Slobodan Milosovic  
(Bottom).

<sup>1</sup> On October 18, 1950, on the British-occupied isle of Cyprus, newly appointed Greek-Orthodox Archbishop Mikhail Makarios made a fateful public announcement. Disregarding the known wishes of Cyprus' sizable Turkish population, the black-robed Makarios declared, "I shall not rest for a moment in my efforts to see union with Greece is achieved."<sup>2</sup> Later as the nascent independent Cyprus' first president in 1960, Makarios presided over escalating inter-ethnic bloodshed that culminated with the island's invasion by the Turkish army in 1974. Many years later in the Balkans, standing before one million of his fellow Serbs gathered on a historic battlefield in Gazimestan, Kosovo, Slobodan Milosevic would echo Makarios' disastrous appeal for ethnic

union. Upon the 600<sup>th</sup> commemoration of a battle in which Serb forces fought a suicidal struggle against a superior army of Ottoman Turks, Milosevic proclaimed to his countrymen that to compromise their dream of a "Greater Serbia" was to betray the memory of Serbian martyrs. Speaking to a fevered crowd, Milosevic alluded to the ethno-religious butchery that would soon engulf the former Yugoslavia saying, "...The Kosovo heroism does not allow us to forget that at one time we were brave and dignified and one of the few who went into battle

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<sup>1</sup> (Top Photo): Tillyrides, Makarios. *The Makarios Legacy in Kenya*. [Hellas Online](http://www.hol.gr/mirrors/hec/gopatalex/seminari.html) 20 Apr. 1999 <http://www.hol.gr/mirrors/hec/gopatalex/seminari.html>. (Bottom photo): Judah, Tim. *Slobodan Milosovic: President under seige?* [BBC New Online](http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/special_report/1998/kosovo/newsid_63000/63851.stm) 9 Mar 1998. [http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/special\\_report/1998/kosovo/newsid\\_63000/63851.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/special_report/1998/kosovo/newsid_63000/63851.stm)

<sup>2</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, October 20, 1950. As quoted by Tozun Bahchelli, *Greek-Turkish Relations since 1955*. Westview Press. 1990. London.

undefeated. Six centuries later, again we are in battles and quarrels. They are not armed battles, *though such things should not be excluded yet.*"<sup>3</sup>

In contrast to Milosovic's rhetoric marking the onset of recent ethnic clashes from the Balkans to Central Asia, Makarios' earlier declaration appears part of the continuing and ostensibly less menacing Greek-Turkish dispute. However, the two assertions are actually related in that they both reference cultural wounds Greek and Serbs suffered at the hands of the Turks, dating as far back as the fall of the Byzantine Empire. However, unlike the enormous attention the Milosovic's Balkan inferno is presently receiving, the slower burning Greek-Turkish feud has in comparison churned on for decades almost forgotten. In vastly altered post-Cold War milieu where the world is increasingly divided as Harvard professor Samuel Huntington predicted along old civilizational cleavages, the enduring feud between Greece and Turkey has taken on increased significance. At the crux of the various ethnic and religious clashes swirling across Europe's periphery, the seemingly benign Greek-Turkish conflict unbeknownst to many represents a means of allaying a perilous and ongoing intercultural upheaval extending from Bosnia to Central Asia. Namely, rather than continuing exhaustive and dubious efforts to quell endless ethno-religious disturbances individually, NATO and the Western powers should instead be trying to convert the Greek-Turkish feud into a cross-cultural model for regional stability. Geo-strategically located at the crossroads between the East and the West, the Christian and Muslim worlds, Greece and Turkey are uniquely suited to be remade into far-reaching territorial exemplars of intercultural accord. The crucial catalyst to achieving this theoretical conversion is the European Union (EU). Already using its economic and political might to make a crucial difference in Greece today, the Europe should also reach out to Turkey with full EU

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<sup>3</sup> Laura Silber and Allan Little. *Yugoslavia: Death of a Nation*. TV Books Inc. 1996. United States.

membership as the first critical step toward erecting Greece and Turkey as this new pattern of inter-ethnic and religious détente. Although this may seem a fanciful scheme, unless Europe, with its allies, adopts just such a bold new strategy, it will confront endless ethno-religious turmoil and thereby endanger Western security interests across a vast and vital region.

Examining the historical evolution of Greece and Turkey's persistent conflict is necessary to understanding why the EU should now make a more concerted effort to transform these old antagonists into allies. At its core, as is common of the many ethno-religious clashes now emerging across Europe's southeastern flank, the Greek-Turkish conflict is founded upon long-suffering efforts to recover lost or consummate newly found group identities. For Greeks, the roots of conflict with Turkey stem from an irredentist dream, the so-called *Megali Idea* or "Great Idea", which maintains that it is Greece's God-ordained destiny to reclaim the lost territories of the Byzantine Empire. In contrast, Turks more recently have struggled to discard their Ottoman past and take up a new identity based upon a combination of Westernism and rediscovered Turkic culture. Yet in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, by inhibiting the realization of each other's identity quests, both Greeks and Turks have both contributed to the heightening of their mutual discord. For example, after WWI in Asia Minor and again upon the island of Cyprus in 1974, Turks humiliated Greeks by thwarting their efforts to reclaim lost Byzantine glory. In retaliation for their perceived losses to the Turks, Greece has become obsessed with obstructing Turkish "expansionism" and in particular its effort to join the European Union. In addition to this tale of thwarted identities, the history of the conflict between Greece and Turkey involves centuries of historical wounds and the more recent details of their competing claims to Aegean territories. To provide a general overview of this historical evolution, this thesis examines the age-old Greek-Turkish conflict in three



chronological phases: from the 1453 fall of Constantinople to the onset of the Cyprus crisis, the evolution of the Cyprus crisis leading up to the island's 74' invasion by Turkey, and lastly, a look at the development of the Greek-Turkish conflict from 1974' to the present.

For the greater part of the complicated history of modern Greek-Turkish conflict, its significance to Western interests has been obscured by other more pressing Cold War priorities. Turkey and Greece's role in containing Soviet expansionism and shoring up NATO's southern flank superceded all other considerations. When the Cold War's bipolar simplicity evaporated, the West made the mistake of believing that Turkey and to a lesser extent Greece were no longer critical to their security needs. To the contrary however, both Greece and Turkey are today emerging as the strategic locus of a myriad of Western interests from the former Yugoslavia to Central Asia. Turkey on the one hand, with its historic and growing economic ties to the Middle East, the Balkans, and the new republics surrounding the Caspian basin, has become a crucial nexus between all of these regions. Given the influence of Iranian-inspired Islamic fundamentalism and the fragile economies of many emergent republics surrounding the Caspian Sea, Turkey provides the region its only model of a Muslim secular democracy with a budding free-market economy. On the other hand, Greece likewise has important cultural ties in the Balkans and an emerging economic might be able to help stabilize the region on the opposite side of this East-West cleavage. As a member of both the EU and NATO, Greece should be serving as important instrument for Western interests in the Balkans. With cultural and religious connections to their "orthodox brothers" in Serbia, Bulgaria, and Romania for example, Greece has much to offer its Balkan relatives as they transition to democracy and implement economic reforms. For these reasons and others, one would think that Western nations, especially those in Europe, would seek to

harness the tremendous energies lost within lingering Greek-Turkish discord. Unfortunately however, there currently exists no consensus among Western powers as to the importance of the Greek-Turkish feud and even more troubling, the EU's approach to the conflict to date may in fact be doing more damage than good.

European strategies toward resolving the Greek-Turkish dispute are both shortsighted and might ultimately lead to Turkey becoming increasingly unstable if not detached from its Western moorings. In apparent support of Greece's policy of escalating pressure, the EU has repeatedly shunned Turkey's applications to join the EU, while it has simultaneously signaled to Cyprus and former Communist-block countries that their EU admittance is just around the corner. In fact, the EU has indicated that unless Turkey acquiesces on a variety of issues, including a settlement to the Cyprus dispute, its chances of joining the EU are virtually nonexistent. Adding to such pressure, Greek-Cypriots with their Greek mainland allies have adopted a strategy of saber-rattling and brinksmanship designed to provoke Turkey and keep the Turkish-Greek argument into the international spotlight. With their recent effort to install long-range Russian surface-to-air missiles on Cyprus, their renewed defense pacts and their increased military spending, both mainland and Cypriot Greeks are determined to force some movement in this conflict's persisting status quo. However, Greek pressure tactics and their seemingly tacit EU support are ill considered and damaging to Western interests. Historically Turks have never responded to such pressures and it highly unlikely they will now. In fact, there is a real danger that Turkey could become disengaged from the NATO alliance and even lose its grip on its secular democratic tradition. To avoid this disastrous possibility, the EU must steer its focus away from the Cyprus issue and instead first develop a policy toward Turkey of acceptance and aggressive economic outreach.

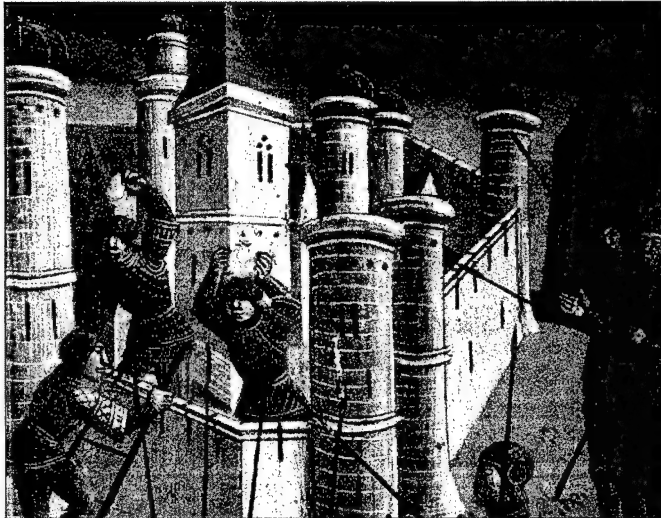
Today, the EU has become the critical catalyst to resolving the Greek-Turkish dispute and transforming it into a far-reaching influence for stability. Having decided to pursue a closer financial union with Europe, the guidance and discipline EU membership imposes on Greece is finally making a significant difference. Spurred on by its desire to gain greater economic stability and prosperity through the European Monetary Union, Greece has of late under the EU's mentorship, achieved considerable success implementing a myriad of liberal reforms. Likewise, Turkey is equally or more ready to make a similar breakthrough if only it had the advantages of EU membership. Not only would Turkey, as Greece has done, stand to gain from the financial and political assistance of EU membership, but more importantly, such membership would serve as the culmination of their lengthy quest to become a European nation. EU membership for Turkey would be an enormous incentive for change and would likely result in a Turkey democratically and economically healthy enough to make peace with its old foe, Greece. By reaching some accord, Greece and Turkey could then apply the enormous energies they now waste bickering with one another toward serving Western interests as a positive and far-reaching regional model of intercultural cooperation.

In the first chapter of this thesis, I have striven to layout key elements of the historical background and evolution of the Greek-Turkish conflict. Following in the second chapter, I hope to describe why in the post-Cold War Era, resolving this enduring conflict has become so crucial to European and overall Western security interests. Lastly, in the third chapter, I attempt to describe how the EU's offering Turkey a blueprint for their eventual full EU membership would begin a process that would ultimately establish Greece and Turkey as these two influential and much-needed regional exemplars of intercultural reconciliation.

## **Chapter One: Historical Roots of the Greek-Turkish Conflict**

The Greeks' frustrated quest to reclaim their Byzantine heritage from the Turks has for five centuries been the driving force behind Greek-Turkish enmity. From their traumatic loss of Constantinople in 1453 until their 1974 humiliation at the hands of Turkish troops on the island of Cyprus, the Greeks nurtured a dream of repossessing the territories of the Greco-Roman Empire. This dream originated from Orthodox Church prophecies of the Empire's divine redemption and evolved into the *Megali Idea* or "Great Idea", which later became both a mainstay of cultural identity and a national crusade for the fledgling Greek State in the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Greeks appeared on the brink of grasping their dream of a Greater Greece as they landed at Smyrna in 1922, however their vision then took a tremendous blow at the hands of Mustafa Kemal (Attatürk), the emergent hero of the Turk's own nationalist aspirations. This great loss at the hands of Attatürk appeared to have ended the Greece's irredentist dream and during the inter-war period there was even a hopeful period of détente between these old adversaries. However, the Greek dream refused to die and later on the island of Cyprus it again raised its head. When an inter-ethnic tensions on Cyprus after WWII culminated in a Turkish invasion in 1974, Greece humiliation and Turkey's newfound confidence contributed greatly to the current fossilization of Greco-Turkish hostilities. Since 1974, Greece has done its best to obstruct Turkey's national identity quest to become part of the West including obstructing its attempts to join the European Union (EU); as a result, Turkey has become almost equally culpable in sustaining this enduring feud. As this century comes to a close, Greek and Turks appear permanently tangled in territorial disputes and escalating acts of military provocation.

## The Pursuit of Lost Identity: From Constantinople to Cyprus



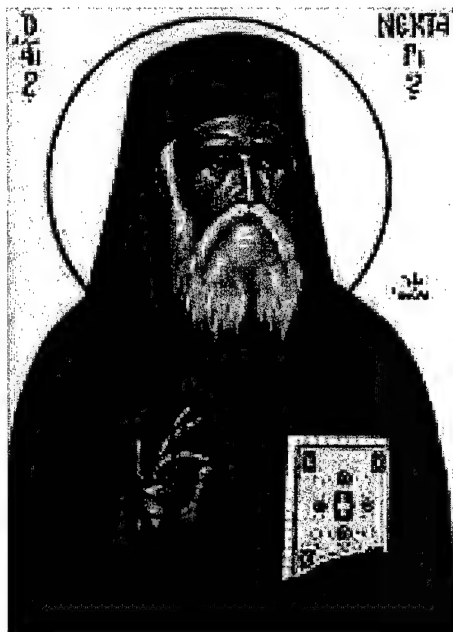
**Figure 1. 1:** Scene from 1453 Fall of Constantinople, Paris 1499. (Twilight Timetravel Corp Online).

<sup>1</sup> After the 1453 fall of Constantinople the Greek Orthodox Church became the dominant influence in the evolution of Greek cultural and national identity. Following the disastrous loss of this center of Eastern Christianity, the Orthodox Church promulgated a vision of God's redemptive plan for the lost

Greco-Roman Empire and thereby established a spiritual nucleus to Greek cultural identity. Despite their early hopes for divine intervention however, as Greeks rose within the Ottoman millet system their increasing access to Western nationalist ideals brought them to endeavor on their own to reconstruct a new Greek Empire. After gaining independence in a war with the Ottoman Empire, the leaders of Greece adopted the Great Idea, a vision of recovering lost Byzantine territories, as a focal point for both Greek identity and national foreign policy. As the Ottoman Empire weakened and as the Great Powers steadily presented Greece with pieces of its lost empire, Greeks grew excited in the certainty that they were witnessing the realization of this vision of a Greater Greece and the fulfillment of old religious prophesy. However, as the emboldened Greeks hastened to seize Asia Minor territories in 1919 as a

<sup>1</sup> *Fall of Constantinople*. Twilight Timetravel Corporation Online. 5 Mar. 1999. 20 Jan. 1999. <http://hyperion.advanced.org/20176/fallconstantinople.htm>.

final step in realizing their national dream, an emergent Turkish nation brutally forced their retreat. This enormous setback followed by the arrival of the Turkish Republic appeared to be the end the Greek vision of a reborn Byzantine Empire. Following this setback, a brief era of Greek-Turkish détente provided the hope that Greeks might resign themselves to a peaceful co-existence with their Aegean neighbor. However, the old irredentist fixation gave one last gasp following WWII when Greeks sought to unite with the island of Cyprus with the mainland—culminating in a 1974 invasion by Turkey, Cyprus has become the focal point of lingering Greek-Turkish animosities in the modern era.



**Figure 1.2:** Greek Orthodox Iconography of St. Nektarios, representative of the Church's role as the cultural focal point for the Greek community under Ottoman rule. (Archdiocese of America Online).

<sup>2</sup> After the enormous shock of losing Constantinople, it was the Greek Orthodox Church that took up the role as guardian to a Greece's Greco-Roman cultural identity and it was here that seeds of future Greek-Turkish antagonism first grew. Under the Ottoman millet system the Greek Patriarch was provided great authority and thereby became the institution upon which Greeks could focus. By promulgating messianic visions and prophecies about future deliverance of the lost Byzantine Empire from the Ottomans, the Orthodox Church provided the foundation of what would be the energy behind future anti-Turkish sentiments. There was a

large body of such messianic teachings sustained by the church. For example, one legend

<sup>2</sup> St. Nektarios. Archdiocese of America Online. 26 Apr. 1999. 26 Apr, 1999. <http://www.goarch.org>.

told of the last Byzantine emperor being last seen fighting alongside his troops against the invading Turks. During the fateful battle, it was said, he transformed himself into marble statue so that he could one-day return to liberate his people.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, other prophecies had certain dates fixed for the return of some redeemer or liberating army who would free the Greeks from Ottoman domination. The Russians also, with whom the Greeks shared Orthodox ties, were often claimed to be the “xanthon genos,” a fair-haired race of future liberators from the north. The many Russo-Turkish wars were often proclaimed as the onset of some hoped for downfall of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>4</sup> The efforts of Orthodox Church were the first stage in the evolution of the Greece obsession to take back what it had lost to the Ottoman Turks. In the next stage, Greeks would take this mission to redeem the fallen Byzantine Empire out of celestial hands and place it into their own.

While the Orthodox Church promised Greeks liberation from the Ottoman Empire by divine intervention, it was Western Ideals brought in by Greeks serving as Ottoman diplomats and merchantmen that convinced Greeks to take control of own national destiny. As the decline of the Ottoman Empire accelerated from the 17<sup>th</sup> Century onward, Greeks arose into positions not only of increasing prominence and wealth, but more importantly ones that provided regular contact with the West. The Western influences of the French Revolution, the Enlightenment, the Renaissance and growing 19<sup>th</sup> Century nationalist movements, proved critical inspiration for Greeks to seek their own independence. For example the Phanariotes, a caste of Greek families in Istanbul, became critical to the Ottomans as interpreters and negotiators as the empire weakened. No longer in a position to dictate peace terms to their vanquished enemies, the ruling Ottoman Turks no had to rely these Phanariot “diplomats” to

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<sup>3</sup> Clogg, Richard. A Short History of Modern Greece. Cambridge: University Press, 1979. 17-25.

<sup>4</sup> Clogg 17-25.

negotiate the outcome of increasingly frequent military defeats. In return for their valuable services, these Greeks were rewarded with islands and territories in the Aegean and Balkans areas to govern. From these positions of authority and wealth, Phanariot became patrons of Greek educational institutions and subsidized a Greek press, which by spreading Western ideals nurtured both advocates and leaders of the future rebellion against the Ottoman Empire.<sup>5</sup> Likewise the emergence of a dominant and widespread Greek mercantile class also provided Ottoman Greeks access to the West and increasing wealth. Serving as the Ottoman importers and exporters, Greek entrepreneurs were allowed to witness the ordered societies of Western Europe and bring their impressions back to their fellow Greeks. Like the Phanariots, wealthy Greek merchantmen were able to sponsor Greek schools and universities that ultimately fostered a vision of Greek nationalism.<sup>6</sup> A variety of Greek leaders emerged in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and led rebellions against the Ottoman Empire. After several failed attempts, with the help of more powerful Western nations, Greeks finally emerged as a nation after a war of independence (1821-1827).

The evolution of the Greek national identity became fatefully complete with the 1844 incorporation of the Great Idea into the nascent Greek State's official doctrine. This embodiment of a long-held Greek vision was in part an instrument to unify the young Greek State, which struggled to control rising political factionalism and hostility toward the still intrusive presence of guardian Western powers. It was in this environment of internal conflict as the state's first constitution was being drafted in 1844 that Prime Minister Ioannis Kolettis introduced the notion around which all Greeks would rally, the so-called *Megali Idee* or "Great Idea." If the expression was new in 1844, the concept was deeply rooted in the

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<sup>5</sup> Clogg 33.

<sup>6</sup> Clogg 49.



Greek popular psyche, nurtured by the Orthodox prophecies that kept alive hope of some emancipation from the Ottoman yoke.<sup>7</sup> However, this old belief now labeled the Great Idea, had itself changed from its early beginnings becoming more complex and virulent. Michael L. Smith characterizes this process in his book, *Ionian Vision*, writing,

The Great Idea...in the mid-nineteenth century came to contain at least three different strains. Strictly interpreted it was the romantic dream of revival of the Byzantine-Greek Empire centered on Constantinople. Less strictly it was the aspiration for Greek cultural dominance within the Ottoman Empire, leading to its gradual subversion from within by a natural process which need not entail violent clash between the rival Greek and Turkish nations. Thirdly, the Idea could be interpreted in terms of the modern state, as a progressive redemption of the Greek irredentia by their incorporation in the Greek Kingdom, which entailed a head-on clash with the Ottoman Empire. *Though all these conceptions survived into the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, it was the third which prevailed.*<sup>8</sup>

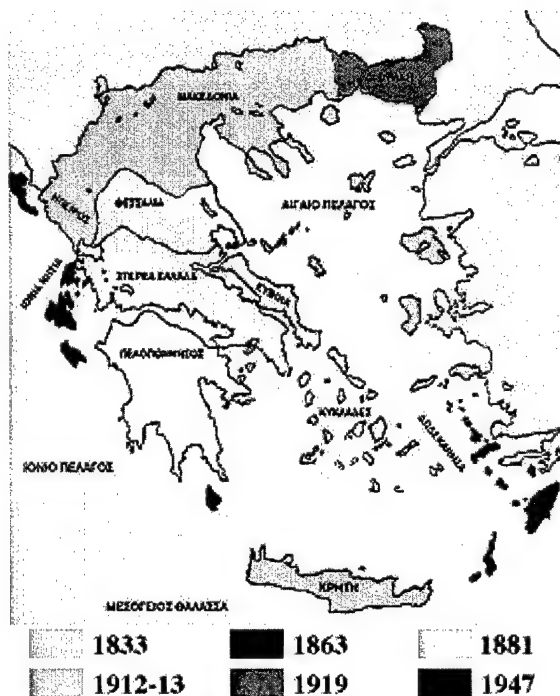
In essence, this Great Idea institutionalized existing societal beliefs within the Greek State. The means by which the state was to accomplish its new mission included a combination of military means and support of a widespread program of educational and cultural propaganda aimed at instilling a sense of Hellenic identity in the numerous Greek populations that remained under Ottoman rule.<sup>9</sup> It was this overly ambitious national dream that in its failure would lay the groundwork for a deep and lasting Greek-Turkish conflict. However, the Greeks rallied to this grand idea and soon events encouraged Greeks to believe that its fulfillment was inevitable.

From the Greek State's early embrace of this irredentist vision, a series of easy territorial expansions encouraged Greeks to see themselves as an ascending great nation. The Great Powers (England, Russia, France, and Germany), many of whom carried sympathies toward a revived Hellenist Empire, repeatedly aided Greece in expanding its borders by providing it

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<sup>7</sup> Woodhouse, C.M. *Modern Greece: A Short History*. London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1991. 165-67.

<sup>8</sup> Smith, Micheal L. *Ionian Vision: Greece in Asia Minor, 1919-1922*. London: Allan Lane, 1973. 4.



**Figure 1.3:** Evolution of Modern Greek State, 1833-1947. Map from National Historical Museum, Athens Greece Online.

<sup>10</sup>territorial gifts taken from the decaying Ottoman Empire. First, Great Britain ceded the Ionian Islands to Greece in 1864. Then, in 1878 as the result of one of a series of Russian-Ottoman conflicts, the Great Powers forced the Ottomans to pass Thessaly and part of the Epirus provinces to Greece. Again later, the Great Powers stood by as Greece won more land from the Turks during two Balkan wars (1912-1913). By the end of the second Balkan War, Greece had seized the port city of

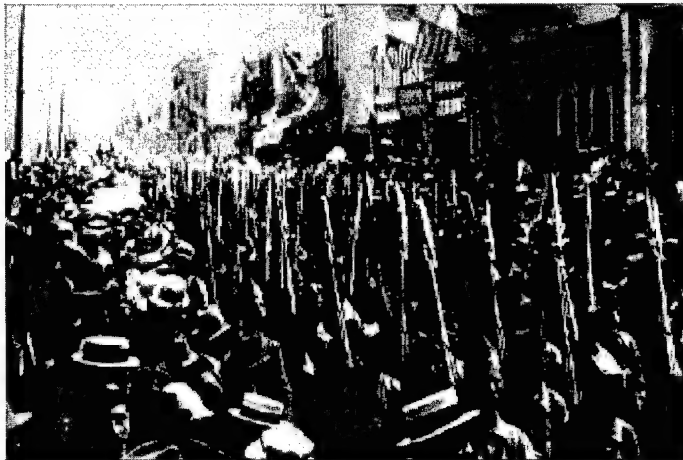
Thessaloniki (Salonica), the capital city of Epirus, a large part of Macedonia, several Aegean islands, and the island of Crete. In the aftermath of these Balkan conflicts, Greece was gripped with euphoria, as it appeared to be realizing the fulfillment of the Great Idea. Miraculously Greece's land area had increased by 70 percent and its population grew from 2.8 million to 4.8 million (fig 1.3).<sup>11</sup> It was on this wave of excitement that Greece entered WWI on the side of the Triple Entente (Britain, France and Russia) as a means of completing their irredentist dream. In fact, the Entente had attempted to lure Greece into WWI as an ally by promising further territorial rewards at the expense of the Ottomans, who had fatefully

<sup>9</sup> Smith 4.

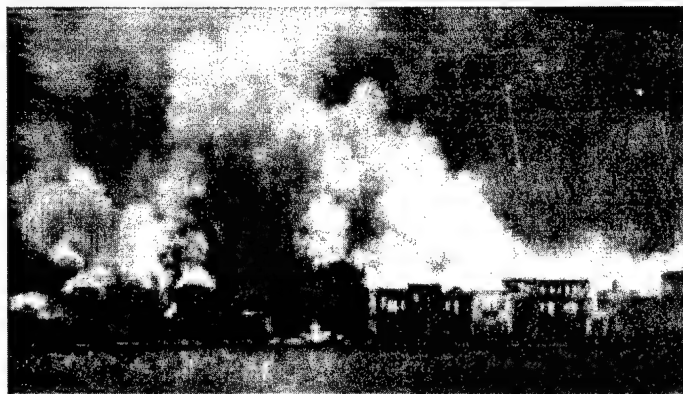
<sup>10</sup> *The Establishment of the Borders of the Greek State*. 15 Mar. 1999. 15 Mar. 1999. [Foundation of the Hellenic World Online](http://www.fhw.gr/projects/vouli/en/timetable/1833.html). <http://www.fhw.gr/projects/vouli/en/timetable/1833.html>.

<sup>11</sup> Clogg 105-107.

joined the war on the side of the Central Powers. However, Greek good fortunes ended at the close of WWI when it received a huge blow to its Great Idea from the Turks.



**Figure 1.4:** Greeks land at Smyrna. Amidst the enthusiasm of its largely Christian population, a detachment of the 1st Greek division marches in Smyrna's waterfront on May 2nd, 1919 from Diaspora WWW project Online.



**Figure 1.5:** Greek army retreats as Smyrna burns in 1922. Discover the Republic of Turkey Homepage Online.

<sup>12</sup> As the victors of WWI were carving up the Ottoman Empire, rising Turkish nationalism delivered what seemed to be the deathblow to Greece's dreams of founding a new empire. In accordance with the 1920 Treaty of Sévres, Greek troops triumphantly landed in Smyrna

<sup>13</sup> (Izmir) in 1919 to lay claim to a Southwestern portion of Anatolia with its heavily Greek-populated areas (fig 1.4). Just a few years later in 1922 however, Greek forces were dramatically routed from the land by a newly formed Turkish nationalist army

under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. As the Greek army fled to ships in the Aegean, Smyrna was burned (fig 1.5) and many Greeks and Armenians were killed. Tens of

<sup>12</sup> *Photo of Greeks Land in Smyrna.* [Diaspora WWW Project Online](http://www.anemos.com/Diaspora/chrys/grlandsm.htm) 1 Jan. 1997. 28 Feb. 1999 <http://www.anemos.com/Diaspora/chrys/grlandsm.htm>.

<sup>13</sup> Argyros, George. *The Turkish Army Destroys Smyrna in 1922.* [Discover the Republic of Turkey Homepage](http://web.ukonline.co.uk/argyros.argyrou/turkey/Smyrna.htm). 1 Aug. 1996. 28 Feb. 1999 <http://web.ukonline.co.uk/argyros.argyrou/turkey/Smyrna.htm>.

thousands of refugees were forced to flee to Greece, thus marking the beginning of the end of a 2,500-year Greek presence in Asia Minor and with it the ostensible demise of the Great Idea.<sup>14</sup>

Out of Greece's humiliating 1922 defeat came a hopeful period of Greek-Turkish détente leading up to WWII. Even though the 1922 retreat from Anatolia was for Greece a tragedy only surpassed by the fall of Constantinople, there were signs that a new period of Greek-Turkish peace might be possible. After the consolidation of Turkey's independence in 1923, Greece under President Eleuthérios Venizélos and Turkey under Attatürk negotiated populations transfers and property issues in an agreement that was further solidified with the signing of the Agreement of Remaining Disputes in 1930. Both highly popular and powerful leaders in Greece and Turkey respectively, Venizélos and Attatürk were able to commit their countries to policies of reconciliation. Attatürk predicted the re-establishment of a new era of cross-Aegean friendship when at the end of the Turkish-Greek War in Anatolia he stated: "I could never myself keep on hating a nation for the mistakes of their government...and toward the Greeks I feel the same. I am confident that we shall soon be friends."<sup>15</sup> Later agreements including the 1933 Friendship Pact establishing the inviolability of borders and the peaceful settlement of matters of common interest and both states support of the 1934 Balkan Entente gave the appearance of a rising accord. However, it didn't take much to bring old animosities back to the surface and to revive the still powerful vision of a Greater Greece. When Turkey stubbornly remained neutral in WWI as Greece was occupied by German troops, the Greeks felt betrayed and quickly revived their old suspicions and hatreds.<sup>16</sup>

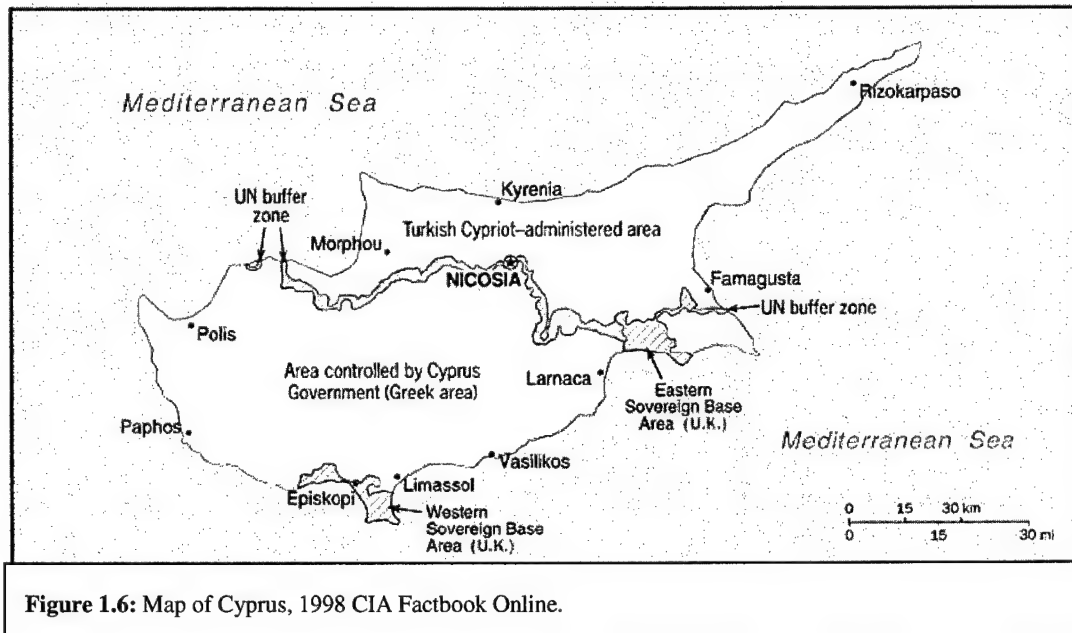
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<sup>14</sup> Clogg 117-122.

<sup>15</sup> Vali, Ferenc A. Bridge across the Bosphorus: The Foreign Policy of Turkey. Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1971. 225.

<sup>16</sup> Bahcheli, Tozun. Greek-Turkish Relations Since 1955. Boulder: Westview Press, 1990. 15.

Greek-Turkish relations remained cool post-WWI until a conflict over the island of Cyprus resulted in the final collapse of the Great Idea and Cyprus thereby became the critical focus of the modern Greek-Turkish dispute.



17↑

### Cyprus: The Death of the Great Idea

Understanding the evolution of the Cyprus issue is essential because it has become biggest roadblock to all efforts to bring peace to the Greek-Turkish conflict in the modern era. As Professor Tozun Bahcheli aptly states, “Of the various issues over which Turkey and Greece have quarreled during the last half century, none has had as profound, damaging, and prolonged an impact as Cyprus.”<sup>18</sup> For centuries the Greeks had cultivated a hope of cultural redemption which later became a central pillar of both their new nation’s identity and mission. Although this vision of reclaiming a lost Byzantine Empire from the Turks had been

<sup>17</sup> *Cyprus*, Map. 1998 CIA Factbook Online. 15 Mar. 1999 <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/cy.html>.

<sup>18</sup> Bahcheli *Greek-Turkish Relations Since 1955* 19.

weakened when Greek troops were thrown back from Asia Minor in 1922, it had not been destroyed. Yet, this enduring dream was finally shattered when Turkish troops occupied a large portion of Cyprus in 1974. After losing this centerpiece of their national identity, Greeks quickly redirected the energies they had invested in realizing the "Great Idea" into a new mission of thwarting the alleged expansionist aims of their historic adversary, the Turks. The 1974 humiliation at the hands of Turks reawakened old Greek fears that their former oppressor was again arising and that containing this powerful evil had now become Greece's primary task. Overall, Cyprus introduced enormous complexities into the modern Greek-Turkish argument and as will be discussed later on, demonstrates why resolving this increasingly important age-old argument requires a novel approach.

The evolution of Cyprus crisis illustrates the power and resilience that the "Great Idea" had and why its collapse in 1974 transformed Cyprus into the most difficult obstacle to resolving the persistent Greco-Turkish feud. A rocky Aegean island located just off the southern Turkey, inter-ethnic peace on Cyprus had historically been maintained by force. However upon Great Britain's 1878 occupation of the island, hope grew among the Greek-Cypriot majority that they might soon unify with mainland Greece. Yet, when Britain refused to surrender its sovereignty over the island, the Cyprus crisis began with the 1950 ascendance of a charismatic leader and zealous advocate of Cyprus' union with Greece, Greek Orthodox Archbishop of Cyprus Mikhail Makarios. After a brief campaign of heated rhetoric, Makarios turned to a campaign of violence to force Britain into surrendering Cyprus to the Greeks. Instead, Cyprus' Turkish minority with the backing of Turkey forced Great Britain to pursue a series of negotiations between Greece and Turkey that culminated with the 1960 London-Zurich Accords and the establishment of the Independent Republic of Cyprus.

Yet Makarios soon balked at the accords instituting a joint federation between both Greek and Turkish Cypriots, claiming that they were unworkable and that he had signed onto the accords under duress. Regardless of whether the accords were in fact unenforceable or whether Makarios' simply did not want to enforce them, the inter-ethnic Cypriot administration collapsed and communal violence again arose. After Greek-Cypriot aggression against Turkish-Cypriots had on two occasions almost brought Turkey to invade the island, Greece grew impatient with Makarios and began to look for an opportunity to replace him. However, an internal coup within a ruling military junta in Greece forced the issue with its new leaders trying to overthrow Makarios and replace him with Nicos Sampson, a Greek-Cypriot infamous for his acts of terrorism against Turks.\* This coup d'état of Makarios was the last straw for Turkey long watched the oppression of Turkish Cypriots and they invaded the island in July of 1974. It is the Greek humiliation and outrage as a result of this invasion that today provides most of the energy driving the contemporary and enduring dispute between Greece and Turkey.

The strong hand of an external empire has traditionally controlled the volatility of the Greek-Turkish ethnic divisions on the small island of Cyprus. Located 40 miles off the southern coast of Turkey and some 500 miles from Athens, Cyprus with its 3,572 square miles of dry land is the third largest island in the Aegean Sea. Over the centuries, Cyprus has been conquered and ruled by the Assyrians, Egyptians, Romans, Arabs, Byzantines, Lusignans, Venetians, Ottoman Turks, and lastly the British. However, despite the islands many rulers, the language and culture has been predominately Greek since it was colonized

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\* Nicos Sampson was a gunman for the pro-Enosis paramilitary organization EOKA, or "National Organization of Cypriot Struggle". Sampson had been convicted for murder and sentenced to death, but received a reprieve by the British administration. Sampson's deeds earned a reputation for brutality against Turkish-Cypriots and came to call him the "Hammer of the Turks."

by Ionian peoples in 1400 BC. Since 1571, when Cyprus came under Turkish rule, the Cypriot population has been comprised of two main ethnic groups: a Greek majority and Turkish minority. Although there has been fluctuations over the years in the size of these two main groups, Cyprus in the modern era has a total population of 748,982 with approximately 78 percent being Greek-Cypriots and the remaining 18 percent being Turkish-Cypriot.<sup>19</sup> Although the Greek majority was in accordance with the Ottoman millet system provided much autonomy during 300 years of Turkish rule, their dream of reuniting with motherland Greece seemed out of reach. Yet, when Britain leased the island from the declining Ottoman Empire in 1878, ostensibly as a base to help the Ottoman Empire keep Russia at bay, and took over the administration of the island, Greek-Cypriots grew excited that Britain might advance their visions of reunion with Greece. Increasing Greek-Cypriot agitation for integration with Greece and Greece's support of the so-called *Enosis* (union) movement threatened not only the Turkish-Cypriot minority, but also the strategic interests of neighboring Turkey. Thus began the long and explosive struggle between Greece and Turkey, Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots over control of Cyprus.

When the British assumed the administration of Cyprus from the Ottomans in 1878, their actions encouraged Greek-Cypriot aspirations for union with Greece, which in turn incited Turkish fears. Upon the 1878 change of power, the Greek Cypriots were confident that the British, as they had in the past, would pass Cyprus as another territorial gift to Greece. Expressing this confidence when he welcomed the first British High Commissioner, the Greek Archbishop of Cyprus declared: "...we trust that Great Britain will help Cyprus, as it

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<sup>19</sup> *Cyprus*. 1998 CIA Factbook Online. 23 Mar 1999. [www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/cy.html](http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/cy.html).



did the Ionian Islands, to be united with Mother Greece, to which it is naturally connected.”<sup>20</sup> Although the British did not broadcast any intent to surrender Cyprus to Greece, for in fact they had none, they gave the impression that they were sympathetic to Greek aspirations. For example, when the British eliminated the legal advantages the Turkish-Cypriots had enjoyed under the Ottomans and creating opportunities in education, finance, and commerce more easily exploited by Greek than Turkish Cypriots, the assumption among the Greek majority was that union with Greece was the next logical step. Such thinking was inflamed when the British during WWI offered Cyprus to Greece in return for their entering the war. Greece declined the offer, but the powerful inference remained that Cyprus was not really a vital British interest. After the war Greek-Cypriot demands grew louder and reached their peak when pro-*Enosis* protests peaked with the 1933 burning down of the Government House in the capital city of Nicosia.<sup>21</sup> After WWII, Greece became more involved with Cyprus and began its own campaign to pressure Britain into ceding their Aegean colony to Greece. As this clamor for *Enosis* grew, Turkish Cypriots feared that they faced the real possibility of being overrun if the majority Greeks got their way. The Turkish minority organized an opposition to *Enosis* and expressed their anti-*Enosis* sentiments to London as they also appealed to Ankara for increased support. In response to Greek-Cypriot and Greek demands, the Turks asserted that should the British abandon the island, it should be either returned to Turkish control or divided into two independent Turkish and Greek halves.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Orr, C.W. J. Cyprus Under British Rule, London: Robert Scott, 1918. 160. As cited in Tozun Bahcheli. Greek-Turkish Relations Since 1955. Boulder: Westview Press, 1990. 24.

<sup>21</sup> Dodd, C.H. The Cyprus Imbrolio. Huntingdon: Eothen Press, 1998. 10.

<sup>22</sup> Dodd 12.



**Figure 1.7:** Archbishop of Cyprus Mikhail Makarios III after signing 1960 London-Zurich Accords. From Photo History of "The Troubles" by J. Higgins Online.

Fulfilling the worst fears of the Turkish-Cypriot community, the 1950 appointment of Mikhail Makarios (fig. 1.7) as the Greek Orthodox Archbishop of Cyprus marked the <sup>23</sup> beginning of an escalating cycle of inter-communal conflict. A native-born Cypriot, Makarios adopted a very aggressive

stance on *Enosis* and quickly rose as the undisputed leader of the movement. He revealed what would be his combative strategy in an Oct 20, 1950 interview with a British newspaper when he said that he did not believe "...as some traitors and friends of England do, that our ideal will be realized within the framework of Anglo-Greek amity. *Enosis* will not be granted. It can only be won by a continuous struggle."<sup>24</sup> Immediately upon assuming leadership as archbishop in 1950, Makarios implemented a two-pronged strategy of pro-*Enosis* propaganda and preparation for armed struggle. He organized a plebiscite in 1950 in which 96 percent of eligible Greek-Cypriots expressed their desire to join with Greece. This vote sparked protests on both sides of the issue and raised the level of alarm in the Turkish-Cypriot community as well as in Ankara. While taking every measure possible to elicit Greek and international sympathy for the Greek-Cypriot's cause, Makarios also prepared for

<sup>23</sup> Higgins, John W. *Photo History of 'The Troubles.'* Cyprus Histories Personal and Official Online. 9 Feb. 1999. 28 Feb. 1999 [www.usfca.edu/fac-staff/higginsj/academi...s/chistory.html](http://www.usfca.edu/fac-staff/higginsj/academi...s/chistory.html).

<sup>24</sup> Manchester Guardian, October 20, 1950. As cited in Tozun Bachcheli. Greek-Turkish Relations Since 1955. Boulder: Westview Press, 1990. 32.



**Figure 1.8:** A Greek Orthodox priest takes part in the fighting on Cyprus. From Photo History of "The Troubles" by J. Higgins Online.

<sup>25</sup> armed struggle. After several years of agitation and Britain's continued refusal to surrender the island's sovereignty, Makarios implemented pre-arranged plans for insurrection.

On April 1, 1955 Makarios enlisted the help of Colonel Grivas, a Greek Army officer, to add armed

insurgency to his continued effort to force the British to quit the island. Forming an uneasy alliance, it was agreed that Makarios would remain in the leading role as the *Enosis*' moment's political leader as Grivas would take charge of the underground organization EOKA (Greek: National Organization of Cypriot Struggle) in a campaign of terrorism. Attacking both the British military and Turkish-Cypriot targets, EOKA aimed to wear down British resolve, draw international attention to the Greek-Cypriot cause and silence the voices of those who spoke out against *Enosis*.<sup>26</sup> Greece, which had long seen the *Enosis* movement as merely an extension of their long-held Great Idea, also began providing both clandestine military and open political support to the Greek-Cypriot effort. In response to the Greek-Cypriot campaign of terror, the Turkish-Cypriots with the support of Ankara also formed an underground defense organization. In 1958, the campaign of terrorism on both sides reached its peak when large-scale rioting and killings led to 120 deaths and 300 injured in one 8-week

<sup>25</sup> Higgins.

<sup>26</sup> Bahcheli, Greek-Turkish Relations Since 1955 33-41.

span.<sup>27</sup> Although they maintained that retaining Cyprus was key to their strategic needs in the Middle East, Britain feared a repeat of disastrous scenarios they had encountered earlier in India, Palestine, and Egypt. While moving to suppress rising violence on the island, Britain simultaneously tried to find some solution to their dilemma through a series of negotiated proposals that attempted to satisfy the interests of both Greece and Turkey and to a lesser degree, those of Greek and Turkish-Cypriots.

Whatever hopes Makarios had of forcing the British to quit Cyprus and agree to *Enosis* where soon dashed when British began negotiations to find a solution to the island's chaos. The British circumvented Makarios and Turkish-Cypriot leader Dr. Fasil Küçük and instead dealt directly with Greece and Turkey. Shortly after EOKA began its campaign of violence, British Prime Minister Anthony Eden invited Greece and Turkey to a London conference. After the conference the positions taken by the Greeks and Turks appeared irreconcilable. Turkey argued that if Britain altered its 1923 Treaty of Lausanne position as Cyprus' sole ruler, then they would insist that the island be ceded back to Turkey. The Greeks asserted that the people of the island should be allowed to determine their own course through a majority vote. Despite the absolutist positions taken by both sides in London, the British followed the conference with a series of proposals in hope of building an agreement. The so-called Harding, Radcliffe, Foot and Macmillan plans were offered over the years 1956 to 1958. Each offered different governing arrangements in attempt to appease the demands and allay the fears of both the Greeks and the Turks. Although each side objected to elements of each proposal, with Makarios usually the most vigorous, elements over time worked to bring all parties towards the view that perhaps independence was Cyprus' best option. Violence on the island had an alarming level in 1958 and was beginning to worry both Greece and Turkey.

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<sup>27</sup> Bahcheli 33-41.

As the Soviets threat suddenly looming larger with the launch of Sputnik, NATO was pressuring Greece and Turkey to shore up its southern flank by putting a stop to the upheaval on Cyprus.<sup>28</sup> Turkey, Greece and even Archbishop Makarios feared London might unilaterally impose some solution on Cyprus that would damage their respective interests. All parties, including Makarios, began to concede that an independent Cyprus, ruled by both Greek and Turkish-Cypriots, might be the most feasible if not most advantageous option. With this consensus emerging, Greek and Turkish foreign ministers were encouraged by Britain to begin new negotiations focusing on creating an independent Cyprus. A series of preliminary discussions began in November of 1958 and eventually led to a summit meeting in Zurich Switzerland attended by the Prime ministers of both Greece and Turkey. Final ratification of the resulting agreement took place February 19, 1959 in London and they became entitled the London-Zurich Accords.

The London-Zurich Accords resulted in a highly complex and onerous system of government for the newly independent Cyprus. The fact that the Greek and Turkish Cypriot leaders had been excluded from direct participation in creation of the agreements would also add to the complexity and lack of commitment to their implementation, especially from Archbishop Makarios. The accords were in two major parts: the Treaty of Guarantee and the Treaty of Alliance. Under the Treaty of Guarantee, both the Greek and Turkish communities were provided communal legislative chambers to govern autonomous ethnic municipalities in matters of religion, education and cultural matters. Furthermore, from these communal legislatures, representatives would be elected to serve in a joint legislature, with the Greeks majority being allowed 70 percent of the seats and the remaining 30 percent to go to the Turks. This 70:30 ratio would likewise be applied to the apportionment of all ministerial and

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<sup>28</sup> Bahcheli 33-41.

civil service positions, with a similar 60:40 ratio of Greeks to Turks within a 2,000-man Cypriot army. Laws were passed in this greater assembly by simple majority, except in matters pertaining to the municipalities, electoral law, or taxes, which required separate ethnic majorities. There was to be a Greek-Cypriot President and a Turkish-Cypriot Vice-President, each of which had the right to veto any legislation.<sup>29</sup> As intricate as London-Zurich accords were, the success of their implementation depended upon the complete support of both Greek and Turkish communities. This level of support unfortunately was never present, particularly in regard to the Greek-Cypriots.

Archbishop Makarios never wanted the London-Zurich accords and despite them he remained determined to see *Enosis* achieved. Makarios signed onto the creation of an independent Cyprus, believing that otherwise Britain would forcibly impose a partition plan and thereby create an even greater obstacle to winning *Enosis*. After the accords were signed however, Makarios soon indicated his defiance and intentions of undermining them when he at an anniversary celebrating the onset of the EOKA guerrilla struggle stated that,

Until this small Turkish community that forms part of the Turkish race which has been the terrible enemy of Hellenism is expelled, the duty of the heroes of EOKA cannot be considered as terminated.<sup>30</sup>

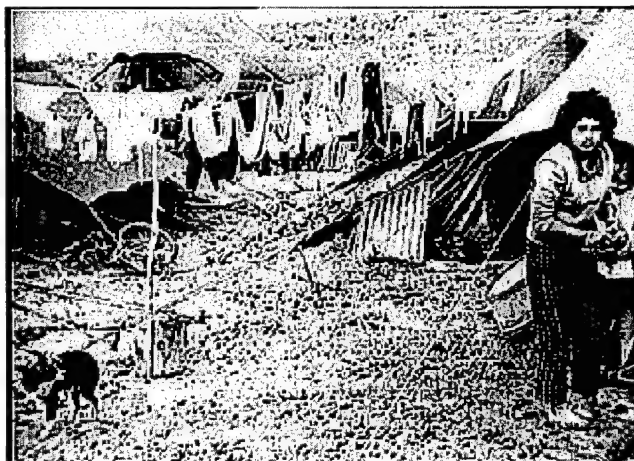
Makarios' intent from the start, as was later discovered when his confidential "Akritas" plan was exposed, was to circumvent and ultimately displace the London-Zurich accords.<sup>31</sup> By continuously complaining about the "unworkable" constitution that had been imposed upon Cyprus, Makarios began implementing his strategy to win international sympathy. While Makarios refused to fully comply with all the tenets of the accords, he and his supporters

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<sup>29</sup> Dodd 20-24.

<sup>30</sup> Denktash, Rauf R. *12'Ye Bes Kala Kibris* (Moment of Decision in Cyprus), Ankara, 1966. As cited in Tozun Bahcheli. *Greek-Turkish Relations Since 1955*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1990. 54.

began to rebuild EOKA in preparation of another armed confrontation. In December of 1963, blaming “Turkish obstructionism” for three years of government paralysis, Makarios delivered to Cyprus’ Turkish-Cypriot Vice President Küçük a thirteen-point plan to modify the constitution.<sup>32</sup> This plan removed many of the vetoes the Turk-Cypriots had been granted under London-Zurich as well as weakened other minority rights. Before Küçük could issue a response, communal violence erupted in Cyprus’ capital city of Nicosia. As a result of renewed violence, Turkish-Cypriot lawmakers and civil servants abandoned their government positions and the 1960 established system for joint rule collapsed.<sup>33</sup>



**Figure 1.9:** Living conditions in a Turkish-Cypriot enclave. From Photo History of “The Troubles” by J. Higgins Online.

<sup>34</sup> From the time they deserted the joint administration in late 1963 until 1974, Turkish-Cypriots were under siege by the Greek-Cypriot majority. Archbishop Makarios’ goal was to compel the Turkish-Cypriots to abandon the 1960 London-Zurich scheme of shared governance and accept minority status within a

unitary Greek state. Refusing to yield and under constant threat of attack or capture, Turkish-Cypriots abandoned their homes in about 103 villages and squeezed themselves into enclaves on less than 3% of the island’s land. In these autonomous yet overcrowded and increasingly squalid settlements, Turkish-Cypriots set up their own armed defense organizations and

<sup>31</sup> Patrick, *Political Geography*. 37-8. As cited in Tozun Bacheli. *Greek-Turkish Relations Since 1955*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1990. 56.

<sup>32</sup> Bahcheli, *Greek-Turkish Relations Since 1955* 59.

<sup>33</sup> Dodd 23.

appealed to Turkey for support.<sup>35</sup> Twice Turkey was on the verge of invading the island to rescue their fellow Turks but was dissuaded from doing so through US diplomatic efforts. The US feared Greece and Turkey, both NATO participants, might go to war over Cyprus and thereby create some vulnerability the Soviet Union might exploit. First in 1964, Turkey was restrained from invading Cyprus when US President Lyndon Johnson delivered a sharply worded letter to Turkey's President İnönü.<sup>36</sup> Later in November of 1967, after a military coup on mainland Greece was followed by a Greek-Cypriot assault on two Turkish-Cypriot villages, it took a US diplomatic mission led by Cyrus Vance to negotiate a last-minute agreement to again forestall a large-scale attack.<sup>37</sup> Yet in 1974, when Turkey saw their brethren on Cyprus again being threatened, they would no longer be restrained.



**Figure 1.10:** Turkish Paratroopers land on Cyprus in 1974. From Photo History of "The Troubles" by J. Higgins Online.

<sup>38</sup> When the ruling military junta initiated a coup to replace Archbishop Makarios in 1974, Turkey ordered its troops to land in Cyprus and remove the threat to Turkish-Cypriots once and for all. Since well before his 1960 protestations over the London-Zurich accords, Greece's leaders

regarded Makarios a difficult pro-*Enosis* zealot, whose independence and propensity for

<sup>34</sup> Higgins.

<sup>35</sup> Bahcheli, Greek-Turkish Relations Since 1955 78.

<sup>36</sup> Hart, Parker T., Two NATO Allies at the Threshold of War. Cyprus: A Firsthand Account of Crisis Management, 1965-1968. Durham: Duke University Press, 1990. 14-16.

<sup>37</sup> Hart 38-120.

<sup>38</sup> Higgins.



reckless actions often put Greece unnecessarily at risk of war with Turkey. His defiance and obstructionism to several Greek efforts to reach a settlement with Turkey over Cyprus had caused Greece to question his real intentions. Was Makarios the pro-*Enosis* champion that the Greek public adored, or rather was he as they suspected, a self-seeking megalomaniac who spoke of *Enosis*, but whose actions indicated he wanted to rule an independent Cypriot Republic? When pro-*Enosis* hard-liner General Ioannidis forcibly assumed the leadership of the Greek military-junta, he decided Makarios was no longer trustworthy.<sup>39</sup> Ioannidis ordered the Athens-controlled Cypriot National Guard to overthrow the Archbishop and replace him with Nicos Sampson, an EOKA gunman known among Turkish-Cyriots as “the hammer of the Turks.”<sup>40</sup> After the overthrow of Makarios, Turkey’s Prime Minister Ecevit demanded that the Greeks junta dismiss the newly installed Sampson and withdraw all its military officers from the island. When the Greeks refused, Ecevit attempted to persuade Britain to take part in a joint military intervention. When the British likewise declined, Ecevit decided Turkey would take action alone.

On 20 July 1974, evoking its right to unilaterally intercede under the 1960 Treaty of Guarantee, Turkey began landing troops on Cyprus. Three days after the invasion, the Greek military junta fell and Turkey agreed to a cease-fire. At the time of the cease-fire, Turkey had captured only a small beachhead in northeastern Cyprus. During this truce, Greece, Turkey, and Britain met in Geneva, Switzerland in an attempt to achieve a negotiated peace settlement. As the negotiation revealed, Turkey’s leaders were no longer willing to go back to the status quo ante of a federated Cypriot administration. Rather, they wanted to preclude future threats to Cyprus’ Turkish minority and demanded a bi-zonal federation that granted

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<sup>39</sup> Bahcheli, Greek-Turkish Relations Since 1955 84-87.

<sup>40</sup> Dodd 30.

Turkish-Cypriots their own autonomous region. When Greece asked for a 36-48 hour period to consider their options, Turkey sensed that any further delay might lead to their losing both military advantage and remaining international support. On 14 August, Turkey began a second offensive and this time seized control of 37% of the island's northern territory. In the resulting upheaval, about 160,000 Greek-Cypriots were forcibly evacuated to the south and some 60,000 Turkish-Cypriots likewise evacuated to the Turkish-controlled north.<sup>41</sup> In short, ethnic partition by force became the *fait accompli* solution to years of inter-ethnic strife. Today, these Turkish troops occupying an entity that since 1983 has declared itself the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), has become the most bitter and immovable point of contention in the modern Greek-Turkish dispute.

#### **From the 1974 Invasion of Cyprus to the Present: The Fossilization of the Greek-Turkish Conflict**

In the aftermath of 1974 Turkish invasion, divided Cyprus has arisen the primary point of contention in the modern dispute between Greece and Turkey. The invasion of Cyprus shattered the remnants of Greece's long-held Great Idea and as a result, Greeks filled this void by taking on a new obsession—thwarting alleged Turkish expansionism. Turkey on the other hand, felt a great sense of accomplishment after their 1974 military intervention as they took an important first step out of isolationism and asserted their increasing regional presence. Responding to Turkey's newfound confidence, Greece has made her 1974 humiliation at the hands of the Turks a national rallying point and since then has challenged their historical nemesis over a variety of territorial claims to the Aegean Sea. Frustrated by decades of impasse over Cyprus, Greece in recent times has increased their efforts to force international attention upon the lingering Cyprus issue through an seemingly dangerous

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<sup>41</sup> Dodd 29-32.

policy of escalating brinkmanship. As the Greek-Turkish feud intensifies within a modern milieu of increasing regional conflicts and with the Cold War no longer its preeminent concern, the West is beginning to take a new look at the importance of this enduring cross-Aegean argument.

When Turkey seized control of a large part of Cyprus in 1974, what remained of Greece's Great Idea and the Greek-Cypriot's reciprocal dream of *Enosis* was finally shattered. This latest blow to Greece's dream since the 1922 disaster in Asia Minor effectively destroyed what had served as the focal point of Greek cultural identity since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century. To fill this void, Greeks shaped a new national mission centered focused upon containing the supposedly rising evil of "Turkish Expansionism." Turkey's invasion of Cyprus left Greeks with a huge scar of humiliation and it inspired exaggerated fears that Greece's old Ottoman master was rising to overwhelm them again. Now that the evil Goliath in the East was ostensibly reawakened and the vision of a "Greater Greece" was no more, Greeks turned their energies toward containing this allegedly rising Turkish aggression. The presence of 30,000 Turkish troops in northern Cyprus serve as a constant reminder of that fateful occasion in 1974 when Greece was helpless in stopping Turkey from asserting her will. Ever since, Greece's foreign policy has been dominated by their need to seize every opportunity to prove Greek potency and reverse their mortifying loss at Cyprus.

On the other hand, their 1974 intervention in Cyprus left Turkey with a huge sense of accomplishment and marked a significant departure from its isolationist past. Turkey's founding father Attatürk had repeatedly warned Turks to refrain from taking part in dangerous "foreign adventures" and as a result, since its inception in 1923, Turkey made great effort to avoid any foreign entanglements. In 1974 Turkey took a major step away from

its internal focus as it forcefully asserted its rising regional presence. On Cyprus, Turks thought they had redressed years of humiliating attacks on their Cypriot compatriots. In addition, Turkey's leaders were pleased they had finally rejected the intimidation of powerful allies like the United States and boldly protected their vital national interests by preventing the reunion of Cyprus with Greece. Likewise, the substantial military presence they retain on the island also has provided Turkey an enormous say in any future settlement efforts.<sup>42</sup> Since 1974, Turkey has more forcefully asserted its rights to Aegean Sea territories against Greek claims and, especially since the fall of the Soviet Union, has steadily increased its influence throughout the Mediterranean and Central Asian regions.

Following Turkey's occupation of Cyprus in 1974, Greece has sought the arbitration of Cyprus and other issues of Greek-Turkish dispute in an international forum, whereas Turkey prefers to settle such matters on the bilateral level. Given that most international organizations have condemned Turkey's occupation of Cyprus, Greece's strategy has been to isolate Turkey and keep the attention of world focused on Turkey's "unlawful action." By maintaining pressure from organizations including the EU, UN, the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and a powerful Greek political lobby in the US, Greece hopes to bring about a maximalist solution to Cyprus and other territorial disputes.<sup>43</sup> Turkey on the other hand, does not trust any third parties such as the EU, UN, or World Court to protect its national interests and instead, prefers to settle its many disagreements with Greece through face-to-face negotiations. Since the fall of the Soviet Union, Greece has increasingly used a policy of brinkmanship to force international attention not only upon the

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<sup>42</sup> Bahcheli, Greek-Turkish Relations Since 1955 103.

<sup>43</sup> Bahcheli, Tozun, and Theodore A. Coulombis, and Patricia Carley, eds. Greek-Turkish Relations and U.S. Foreign Policy: Cyprus, the Aegean, and Regional Stability. Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace, 1997. 13.

Cyprus debate, but also to highlight other alleged Turkish encroachments on Greece's Aegean territorial rights.

As a result of the 1974 Turkish invasion of Cyprus, there has been an overall escalation in conflicts between Greece and Turkey in regard to opposing claims of sovereignty and access to Aegean Sea territories. Having been deeply humiliated on Cyprus and deprived of its irredentist vision, Greece has since turned its energy to containing alleged Turkish expansionism. In response, Turkey has increasingly been unwilling to accept what it considers unfair Greek claims to the vast majority of the Aegean area and has welded its military muscle to defend its interests. In particular, since the 1974 Cyprus conflict, Greece and Turkey have nearly come to blows over four key issues related to Aegean territories: sovereign rights over the continental shelf, the limits of the territorial sea, sovereign airspace (as well as the control of military and civil air traffic control zones), and the remilitarization of the Greek islands in the eastern Aegean. In general, these points of conflict emanate from Greece's contention that given their ownership of almost all of its 2,000 islands, the Aegean Sea is inherently Greek. Oppositely, the Turkish perspective is that since they are too an Aegean nation, they should have equal and equitable share of or access to Aegean resources.<sup>44</sup> From 1974 until today, these disputes over Aegean territorial rights amongst others have further complicated the enduring Greek-Turkish conflict.

Given its potential oil riches, rights the continental shelf of the Aegean has become a significant point of contention between Greece and Turkey in the modern era. According to the 1982 United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea (Article 76), the 'continental shelf' of a coastal state:

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<sup>44</sup> Bachel, Greek-Turkish Relations Since 1955 130.

comprises the sea-bed and subsoil of the submarine areas that extend beyond its territorial sea throughout the natural prolongation of its land territory to the outer edge of the continental margin, or to a distance of 200 nautical miles from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured where the outer edge of the continental margin does not extend to that distance.<sup>45</sup>

Only months before the Turkish invasion of Cyprus, the first dispute over the continental shelf emerged on 1 November 1973. Turkey had watched Greek vessels conducting oil exploration in the Aegean since 1960 and in the early 1970's, decided to stake its own claim to potential reserves under the continental shelf. Issuing permits to a state-owned petroleum company, Turkey began to search for oil west of the Greek islands of Samothrace, Mytilene, and Chios. Greece responded at first with a diplomatic note to Ankara claiming that Turkey's exploration permits had been granted were on the sovereign territories of Greek islands. By the summer of 1974, tensions had escalated to the point where Turkish warships were escorting their nation's survey ships around the Aegean. In the aftermath of the 1974 invasion, the Greek-Turkish dispute continental shelf dispute has only intensified. Greece has taken the stance that international law has granted it the right to most of the shelf and has repeatedly brought allegations of territorial violations against Turkey before the UN and the World Court.<sup>46</sup> In opposition, Turkey has refused to recognize the authority of international adjudicating bodies and treaties to which it is not a party, and instead claimed that equity should be the overriding principle in delineating maritime boundaries. Turkey contention still is that fairness demands Aegean Sea should be divided evenly by drawing an equidistant

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<sup>45</sup> United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, UN document A/CONT. 62/122 of October 7, 1982.

<sup>46</sup> Bachelier, Greek-Turkish Relations Since 1955 131-138.

median-line between the two countries; however, international law has not supported this contention.<sup>47</sup>

Like the competing claims to the continental shelf below the Aegean Sea, others have emerged regarding territorial waters on the surface. In 1936, Greece expanded its claim to territorial waters off its mainland and islands' coast from three to six miles. Likewise, Turkey has also asserted its right to six miles of territorial waters. Even at this internationally recognized limit of six miles, Greece, with its hundreds of Aegean island, had control over 35 percent of the Aegean, compared with only 7.6 percent for Turkey. Turkey felt its access to the Aegean was unfairly constricted given that the six-mile territorial waters boundary allowed them only three places their shipping could enter or leave Turkish territorial waters from international waters.<sup>48</sup> Understandably, when the 1982 UN Convention of the Law at sea provided nations the right to extend their territorial sea line to twelve miles, Turkey said if Greece were to do so they would consider it a cause for war. Such an extension would reduce the percentage of international waters within the Aegean Sea from 56 to 26 percent and Turkey would not be able to legally access these waters without first receiving permission from Greece. Although Greece has thus far refrained from extending its boundary from six to twelve miles, it emphatically reserves the right to do so.<sup>49</sup>

Like the surface territorial waters dispute and that of the continental shelf below, the Greeks and Turks also have clashed over the control of Aegean airspace. In 1931, Greece by presidential decree unilaterally extended their claim to sovereign airspace from six to ten miles. Turkey has responded by claiming that according to international law, national

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<sup>47</sup> Lesser, Ian O. Bridge or Barrier? Turkey and the West After the Cold War. Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 1992. 18.

<sup>48</sup> [Article 3] United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, UN document A/CONT. 62/122 of October 7, 1982.

airspace boundaries should correspond to the 6-mile territorial sea limit. As a result Turkish warplanes have repeatedly challenged the Greek airspace claim by flying up to the 6-mile limit of many of the Greek Aegean islands. The Greeks in response have also sent up their warplanes in what a routine game of aerial shadow boxing, which during the Cold War caused NATO heightened concern that one of these aerial showdowns might spark a war. Although such aerial shadowboxing continues today to add to a tense environment, none has yet resulted in bloodshed. As was the case with territorial waters, Turkey contends that extending airspace to a 10-mile limit of both Greek mainland and island territories unduly hampers the free movement of Turkish military and commercial air traffic. In addition, in the aftermath of the 1974 fighting in Cyprus, Turkey challenged Greece's domination of the Aegean Flight Information Region (FIR), which they had consented to in a 1952 joint agreement sanctioned by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).<sup>50</sup> Since 1974 however, Turkey has reclaimed rights to control air traffic on the eastern side of an Aegean median point. As part of the Greek-Turkish conflict's many intricacies, both sides continue to accuse the other of abusing its airspace rights or of being incapable of administering its particular FIR.

On the many areas of contention between Greece and Turkey, one which the Turks perceive as most menacing is Greece's remilitarization of certain eastern Aegean islands close to the Turkish coastline. In the 1960's Turkey began complaining that the Greeks were basing excessive troops on islands close to their coast and thereby violating tenets of the 1923 Lausanne Treaty. The Turks complained that the Greeks had upgraded airports and stationed hundreds if not thousands of troops on islands that had been specifically delineated under this

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<sup>49</sup> Bahcheli Greek-Turkish Relations Since 1955 140-143.

<sup>50</sup> Bahcheli Greek-Turkish Relations Since 1955.



treaty as not to have any military presence outside a small police force. Greece at the time denied that there had been any such buildup of military assets. However, in the aftermath of the 1974 Turkish invasion of Cyprus, Greece did begin fortifying several of the islands the Turks had previously mentioned. Greece has since maintained that in the face of Turkish aggression, such efforts were only necessary defensive measures. In response to this Greek militarization of islands just off their coastline, Turkey created the a new “Army of the Aegean” or 4<sup>th</sup> Army, to ostensibly counter these island “daggers” threatening the their mainland.<sup>51</sup> Greece has responded to Turkey’s evoking Lausanne Treaty provisions by saying that the later Treaty of Montreux had already superceded Lausanne and that such self-defensive measures in any case were of no threat to Turkey.

Greece and Greek Cyprus, frustrated with the status quo of a divided Cyprus and continuing territorial disputes over the Aegean, have together in recent years tried force a change in the status quo. As one important element of this effort to pressure the Turks involves the negotiations for Cyprus’ admittance into the EU that began in 1998—a move that has put increased pressure on both Turkish Cyprus and Turkey to reconsider their stance on Cyprus among other disputed issues. In addition, Greece and Greek Cyprus have both launched unprecedented spending sprees on sophisticated weaponry and announced new shared defense arrangements, which Turkey has perceived as changing the balance of regional military power. Although many outside observers consider this a dangerous tactic that the Greeks have chosen, Greece and Greek Cyprus believe such provocations provide them bargaining chips and keep global attention focused on Cyprus and related Aegean

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<sup>51</sup> Couloumbis, Theodore A. *The United States, Greece, and Turkey: The Troubled Triangle*. New York: Praeger, 1983. 122.

disputes.<sup>52</sup> Greek optimism regarding this strategy has of yet proven, as many suspected, to be a misguided one.

Greek Cyprus' successful effort to have Cyprus included among the near-term candidates for EU membership was seen by Greeks as a means to pressure the TRNC as well as Turkey into resolving the enduring Cyprus issue. Already economically far behind the Greek Cypriot Republic, Greek Cypriots thought the prospect of the TRNC being left further behind as the Greek half of Cyprus further benefited from EU membership, would encourage Turkish Cypriots and Turkey to be more accommodating on contested issues. EU Commissioner Hans Van den Brook highlighted this dynamic that the Greeks thought would work to soften the Turks when he in spring of 1998 said:

Our member states and the European Commission prefer, by far, the entry of a united Cyprus. We are not looking for enlargement with a divided island. But at the same time, the European Union has said we cannot continue to keep Cyprus hostage by the lack of political will, notably on the side of Turkey, to reach a political solution here<sup>53</sup>

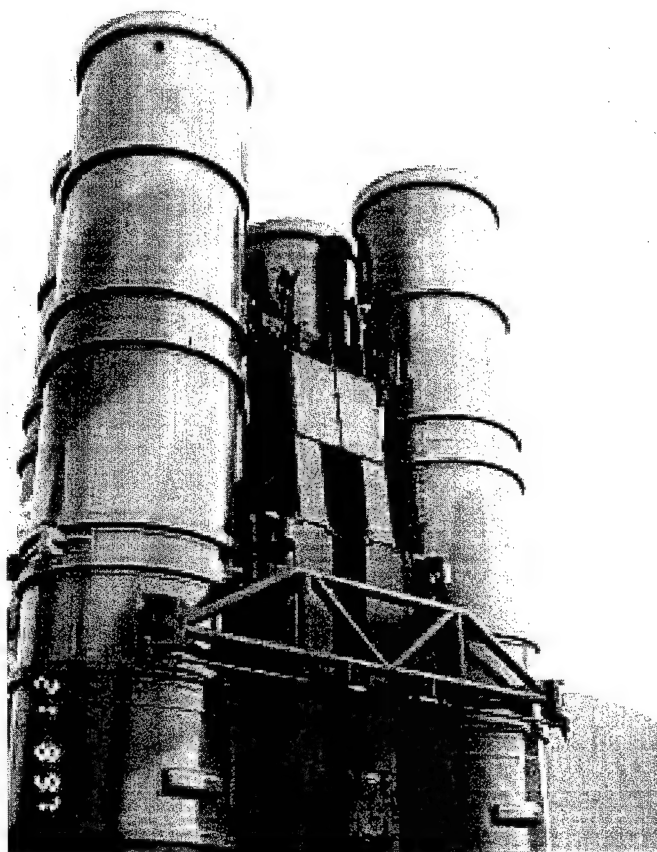
Yet, thus far the Greek scheme to influence the Turks with the threat of Cyprus' EU accession has not paid off. Turks both in Cyprus and on the mainland have to date only gone in the opposite direction by hardening their position. In fact, Turkey has threatened that if the EU proceeds in making the Greek Cypriot Republic a member, they in turn will absorb the TRNC as part of Turkey.<sup>54</sup> This failed Greek effort to pressure Turkey is similar to their blundered attempts to bully their old foe with saber-rattling.

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<sup>52</sup> Theodoulou, Micheal. *Playing Chicken—The Politics of Brinkmanship*. Christian Science Monitor. 24 Jan. 1997.

<sup>53</sup> Guttman, Robert J. *Enlargement to the East: A New Chapter Begins*. Europe. Jul-Aug 1998: n 378. 20-22.

<sup>54</sup> Buyse, Alex. FBIS Document ID: FTS19990204000856. *Missile Crisis Was Not a Fiasco*. Groot-Bijgaarden De Standaard. 4 Feb. 1999. 8.



**Figure 1.11:** Russian S-300/NATO SA-10 Missile System in portable silos. Purchased by Greek-Cyprus in 1996. Photo from 97' Moscow Air Show. Jane's Online.

<sup>55</sup> Taking the lead in what has become a spiraling arms race between Greece and Turkey, Greece had hoped to bully Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots to their way of thinking on a range of disputes, especially Cyprus. Greece in 1998 was purchasing arms at a rate of \$2 million worth a day and scheduled to spend \$11 billion before 2001.<sup>56</sup> Turkey too is keeping pace with Greek military spending with a budgeted \$31 billion for weapons upgrades and

new armaments before the year 2008.<sup>57</sup> As Greece and the Greek Cypriot Republic have pronounced a bolstered defense pact, expanded the Paphos air base in southwestern Cyprus to shelter more warplanes, and ordered the latest battle tanks, it has been their acquisition of Russian long-range surface-to-air (SAM) missiles that caused great commotion. These S-300 SAMs, with their 95 mile range extended well into Turkey's mainland territory and directly

<sup>55</sup> *Show Reports: Jane's Defense Upgrades.* Jane's Online. 1-15 Nov. 1998.  
<http://www.janes.com/defence>

<sup>56</sup> Bahcheli, Couloumbis, and Carley. Greek-Turkish Relations and U.S. Foreign Policy: Cyprus, the Aegean, and Regional Stability 11.

<sup>57</sup> Borowiec, Andrew. *Turkey, Foes Engage in Race to Buy Arms; Military Shopping Spree Taxes Budget.* The Washington Times, 14 Oct. 1998, A13.

threatened their ability to provide air cover to Cyprus. Upon learning of their planned deployment on Cyprus, Turkey went public with a threat to destroy them.<sup>58</sup> Greek Cypriot President Glafcos Clerides was clearly hoping the missiles would convince his Turkish Cypriot rival, Rauf Denktash, to be more compliant in resolving the lingering island dispute. However as the missiles were near to arriving in the fall of 1998, diplomats from the EU and the US convinced Greece and Greek Cyprus that it was in their best interest not to provoke Turkey. As a result, Greece and their island compatriots agreed at the end of 1998 to station the missiles on Crete, a much less threatening location.<sup>59</sup>

From the roots of Greek animosity toward Turks extending back to the 1453 fall of Constantinople, to the modern status quo of bitterness Greeks and Turks have for frustrating one another's quests for national identity, the Greek-Turkish lingers on. For most of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the Cold War has allowed the West to disregard the true significance of this enduring inter-cultural quarrel. In the rapidly changing world that has emerged in the aftermath of the Soviet Union's collapse, this cross-Aegean argument is beginning to show its true significance. Gone are the days of bi-polar simplicity where the West's enemy was a monolithic Communist Bloc. Today, as will be discussed later, the world is breaking down along religious and civilizational fault lines. In the post Cold War environment, the West continues to struggle to find some means of bringing stability and peace to seemingly endless regional conflicts. As this thesis will argue, Greece and Turkey are ideally suited to be transformed into what the West desperately needs, a new model for cross-cultural economic

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<sup>58</sup> Anderson, James and James Phillips. *Averting War between Greece and Turkey*. The Washington Times. 9 Oct. 1998, A18.

<sup>59</sup> Kharalambidhis, Yiannos. FBIS Document NC0301133299. *Greece Prepared the Idea on Canceling the Russian Missiles*. Nicosia I Simerini. 3 Jan. 1999.

and political accord that will achieve a more lasting peace across a region extending from the Balkans to Central Asia.

## Chapter Two: Greece and Turkey—Missing Pillars of Regional Stability?

If we've learned anything from the century drawing to a close, it is that if America is going to be prosperous and secure, we need a Europe that is prosperous, secure, undivided and free...Now what are the challenges to that vision of a peaceful, secure, united, stable Europe? The challenge of strengthening a partnership with a democratic Russia, that despite our disagreements, is a constructive partner in the work of building peace. *The challenge of resolving the tensions between Greece and Turkey, and building bridges with the Islamic world.* (Emphasis added)

US President Clinton's televised address explaining  
why America was involved in the Kosovo crisis  
March 24, 1999

Two of the keys to maintaining a stable and secure Europe into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, as President Clinton suggested in his Kosovo speech, are to resolve the persistent Greco-Turkish dispute and to "build bridges" to the Islamic World. From the President's address, one might infer that one objective of NATO's ongoing bombing of Serbia is to win the trust of Muslims around the world. In other words, by punishing Serbian leader Slobodan Milosovic for his intransigence and acts of genocide against Muslim Kosovars, NATO would prove its capacity to defend non-Christians and thereby take a big step toward greater inter-cultural peace. Yet, in view of the considerable military might being brought to bear on Serbia, ostensibly to build a more stable Europe, the question arises: Is the West neglecting less destructive and more promising means of spanning old divisions between Muslims and Christians? Yes, it is. In fact a more lasting solution to quieting the inter-cultural upheaval in Europe and beyond lies in another challenge Clinton mentioned—that of resolving the lingering Greece-Turkish dispute. Although there is merit in the West's ongoing endeavor to subdue Milosovic, ending Greek-Turkish imbroglio is worthy of an equally concerted effort.

Confronting a fundamental shift in the nature of conflict in the post-Cold War era, the West needs to develop a new approach to sustaining regional stability. Since the Soviet

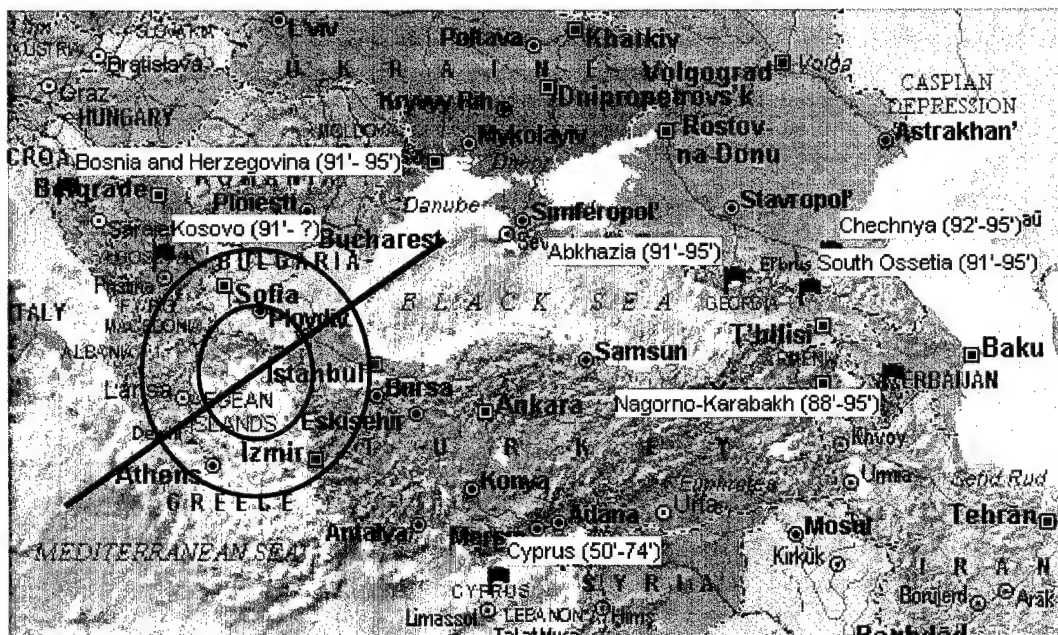
Union's collapse, the simple bipolar ideological boundaries of the world have been replaced with a confusing array of ethnic, religious and cultural divisions. Violent clashes in the former Yugoslavia, Chechnya, and Nagorno-Karabakh offer evidence of an alarming trend toward reawakening inter-civilizational animosities that threatens a wide spectrum of Western security interests. To counter this rising peril, Europe and the US must shed their ingrained Cold War mentalities and jointly seek to construct new models of cross-cultural détente. Greece and Turkey, located at a historical crossroad of Eastern and Western civilizations, are ideally suited to serve as the first of such potential models. Unfortunately, the promise of this notional archetype of inter-civilizational peace remains lost in the Greek-Turkish quarrel. Impeding the tremendous benefits resolving this Aegean conflict might bring is a pattern of neglect on the part of the West, which has been pre-occupied with ostensibly more pressing crises. Yet, if rising conflicts from the Balkans to Central Asia are to be controlled and Western interests protected, the United States, the European Union (EU), and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) must transform the enduring Greek-Turkish conflict into a new ensample of inter-cultural accord.

As the nature of world conflict has changed dramatically with the end of the Cold War, the West has struggled to shift its strategic bearing. Gone are the simpler times when the world's nation-states fell under gravitational pull of either Communism or Western Liberalism. From Central Europe to the Central Asia, replacing this Cold War status quo has been an alarming number of regional conflicts emanating from old ethnic and religious cleavages. In his controversial essay in *Foreign Affairs* in the summer of 1993, Samuel Huntington describes this post-Cold War milieu writing:

The great divisions among humankind and the dominating sources of conflict will be cultural. Nation-states will remain the most powerful actors in world

affairs, but the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations. The clash of civilizations will dominate global politics. The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future.<sup>1</sup>

Offering support to Huntington's cultural "fault line" hypothesis, are the root causes of a series (see fig 2.1) of recent ethno-religious conflicts in the Balkans, the Caucasus and in Central Asia. In each one of these cases, national identities that were imposed by the Soviet Union or as in the case of Cyprus, Imperial Britain, have been displaced with deeper ones based upon ethnicity and religious creed. As Huntington argues, the modern era appears to have become one in which cultural fault line wars will be intermittent, yet fault line conflicts will remain interminable.<sup>2</sup> If such is the case, as is argued here, the West's status quo (<sup>3</sup>↓)



**Figure 2.1:** Recent Intercultural Conflicts. Looking at both Greek and Turkish spheres of influence, one can see the many recent conflicts whose root causes appear to support Huntington's cultural "fault line" theory (Map constructed from Encarta 97' World Atlas).

<sup>1</sup> Huntington, Samuel P. *The Clash of Civilizations*. *Foreign Affairs* Summer. 1993: 22.

<sup>2</sup> Huntington, Samuel P. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996. 291.

<sup>3</sup> *Recent Intercultural Conflicts*. *Encarta World Atlas*. Microsoft Corporation. CD-ROM. Washington. 1997.



prescriptions for resolving such conflicts to date will ultimately fail since they only address these crises superficially and do not alleviate their root causes, i.e. ancient inter-civilizational cleavages.

Recent ethnic-separatist bloodshed in Bosnia, Chechnya, Nagorno-Karabakh and Kosovo suggest that there is some validity to Huntington's theory of reemerging cultural cleavages.



**Figure 2.2:** Religious Fervor in Chechnya. Supporters of Chechen President Aslan Maskhadov attend a rally in Grozny, Tuesday, March 16, 1999. Maskhadov rallied 30,000 supporters Tuesday, saying the warlords who seek to oust him from power have put the breakaway republic on the verge of anarchy. Maskhadov's supporters stood for hours in heavy rain at Freedom Square, in the center of the capital Grozny, chanting "Khalid, Khalid" - Maskhadov's Islamic name. (AP Photo/Ruslan Musayev)

<sup>4</sup> For example, in the former Yugoslavia, fears of being overwhelmed by their ethno-religious neighbors encouraged Orthodox Serbians, Catholic Croats, and Muslim Bosnians to take up arms to attain their own "ethnically pure" nations.<sup>5</sup>

Similarly in the Caucasus region in 1995, predominately Muslim Chechen rebels (see fig 2.2)

fought a bloody struggle against Russian troops in to assert their own Muslim identity within a newly autonomous republic. Again in the area of Central Asia's Armenian-dominated Nagorno-Karabakh province, Orthodox Armenians in 1994 fought against Muslim Azeris also to realize some irredentist vision. In the Balkans, ethnically Albanian Muslims are presently struggling against Orthodox Serbians to carve out their own independence in the

<sup>4</sup> Musayev, Ruslan. *Rally in Chechnya*. Yahoo! News – AP International Photos Online. 14 Apr. 1999. <http://dailynews.yahoo.com/headlines/g/wl/>.

<sup>5</sup> Paul, Annie Murphy. *Psychology's own Peace Corps: Global Ethnic Conflict*. *Psychology Today* Jul.-Aug 1998: 56-60.

province of Kosovo. In line with Huntington's hypothesis, what the West is witnessing in and around Europe is not some passing flare-up of post-Cold War ethnic tensions. Instead, it is a trend that represents a rising threat to Western interests—a threat that demands a unique and immediate response.



**Figure 2.3:** American Soldier in Bosnia—Keeping the Peace? At the cutting edge of status quo Western “containment” policies toward a series of ethno-religious conflicts, U.S. soldier Stanley Waddill of Glen Rose, Texas, writes a letter home from the back of his armored “Humvee” vehicle on Saturday March 13, 1999. Waddill is among 6,200 US soldiers in 32,000 strong contingent NATO-led peacekeeping forces in Bosnia. (AP Photo/Amel Emric)

<sup>6</sup> To counter the ascendance of inter-cultural turmoil and protect its interests across its expanding southern flank, Europe and its allies must chart a new diplomatic course. Although well intentioned, current approaches to recent

conflicts from Bosnia to Chechnya have been ill defined and uncoordinated and produced as successes what are at best only interim solutions. Current efforts involving huge expenditures and the deployment of thousands of peacekeeping troops to administer ethnic and religious partitions of Dayton-style accords will not establish a lasting peace, but rather only interim pauses to age-old ethno-religious animosities. Instead, to achieve a lasting regional stability on Europe's periphery and beyond, the West must not only stop ongoing bloodshed, but also seek to build bridges over emerging cultural fault-lines. However noble

<sup>6</sup> Emric, Amel. *Keeping the Peace?* Yahoo! News – AP International Photos Online. 18 Apr. 1999. <http://dailynews.yahoo.com/headlines/g/wl/>.



**Figure 2.4: Intercultural Warfare in Yugoslavia –** At a funeral ceremony in the village of Grajkovac, Yugoslavia, north-west of Pristina, ethnic Albanian woman cry over the bodies of relatives killed in inter-ethnic fighting around the separatist province of Kosovo. (Reuters Photo/Oleg Popov).

<sup>7</sup>and necessary it may be to stop “ethnic cleansing,” the West’s long-term security interests can only be secured by establishing new exemplars of inter-religious, inter-ethnic and ultimately inter-civilization harmony. Opportunities to establish such inter-cultural models of peace will be rare, however it is this thesis’ contention that at least in regard

to the turmoil around Europe’s southeastern periphery, the enduring Greek-Turkish dispute presents the West with just such an opportunity.

In large part due to their chronic bickering, Greece and Turkey remain two dormant yet potentially significant pillars of inter-cultural cooperation and economic stability amidst persistent turmoil stretching from the Balkans to Central Asia. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the frontlines of Europe’s strategic interests have gradually expanded both to the south and east. At the juncture of these widening territorial boundaries, Greece and Turkey together have exhibited the potential to serve Western interests as a powerful and desperately needed archetype of cross-civilizational accord. As a Gulf War proven platform to project Western power into the Middle East, a critical model of secular democracy and economic liberalism for new Central Asian republics, and a conduit to vast Caspian Basin oil reserves, Turkey’s value as a Western asset continues to increase. Opposite, Greece as a member of both the EU and NATO, is likewise strategically positioned to advance Western

<sup>7</sup> Popov, Oleg. *Intercultural Warfare*. Yahoo! News – Reuters International Photos Online. 19 Apr. 1999. <http://dailynews.yahoo.com/headlines/g/ts/>

interests as a guide to their Orthodox “brethren” throughout the Balkans as they transition to economic liberalism and democracy. Unfortunately, despite such evidence of Greece and Turkey’s potential as a new model of cross-cultural accord in service of their geo-political interests, the West thus far has lacked the vision or will to seize this critical opportunity.

### **Turkey: The Eastern Pillar of the Greek-Turkish Model**

With far-reaching cultural and economic ties Turkey stands as the stronger eastern-facing half of potential Greek and Turkish pillars of regional stability. Contrary to early predictions, Turkey’s strategic importance to the West in the aftermath of the Soviet Union’s collapse has not declined, but steadily increased. Turkey’s expanding strategic significance most prominently was brought to light during the Gulf War, when the West relied heavily upon Turkish support to achieve its rapid victory over Iraq. Responding to Western encouragement after the war with Iraq, Turkey has taken up the challenge of becoming a regional model of Westernism by expanding its ethnic and religious ties to the emerging Turkic Republics in Central Asia. Demonstrating its budding capacity to serve Western interests by fostering free market economies and democracy among its neighbors, Turkey founded the Black Sea Economic Cooperation. Also as further evidence of its rising place in Western Eurasian strategies, pipelines through Turkey may soon offer the West access to reportedly vast Caspian Basin oil reserves to lessen its dependence on Persian Gulf supplies. Most importantly, as the “single and most advanced westernizing state in the entire Islamic world” writes Duygu Sezer, Turkey serves the West by providing this predominately Islamic region a crucial alternative political model to that of Iranian fundamentalism.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Sezer, Duygu B. *Turkey in the New Security Environment in the Balkan and Black Sea Region. Turkey Between East and West: New Challenges for a Rising Regional Power*. Ed. Vojtech Mastny and R. Craig Nation. Bolder: Westview Press, 1996. 87.

According to many early assessments following the fall of the Berlin Wall, Turkey's strategic significance to the West would only decline. Once a critical ally on the southern flank of the NATO's effort to contain Communist expansionism, following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Turkey found itself on the backburner of Western concerns. Europe and NATO, preoccupied with the reunification of Germany, the Gulf War, and series of reemerging ethno-religious conflicts, neglected Turkey as a Cold War ally whose strategic significance had seemingly dissipated. However, in less than a decade, Turkey's geo-strategic importance to American and European interests again was evident. Recognizing Turkey's return to the upper echelons of Western priorities, one-time U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke in 1995 stated:

Turkey is at the crossroads of almost every important issue for the U.S. on the Eurasian continent, including NATO, the Balkans, the Aegean, Iraqi sanctions, Russian relations with the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union, peace in the Middle East, and transit routes for Central Asian oil and gas. Hence, keeping Turkey tied tightly to the West remains a strong U.S. priority.<sup>9</sup>

Up to the present, world events continue to highlight Turkey's enormous promise as a westernizing force amidst an increasingly strategic and vital region.

Perhaps nothing has been so demonstrative of Turkey's regional significance to the West as was its role in the Gulf War. At great cost Turkey's President Turgut Özal went out of his way to show his NATO allies that Turkey was an indispensable asset to the West. By shutting down lucrative Iraqi oil pipelines running through Turkey and allowing NATO warplanes to operate from Turkish airbases, Özal made his country one of the West's strongest allies during the Gulf crisis. As Montegale Stearns wrote regarding Turkey's contributions to the West's success in the Gulf War, "Without the full cooperation of Turkey,

the economic embargo of Iraq would have lacked credibility even as an admonition, and the military campaign would almost certainly have been more drawn out and costly.”<sup>10</sup> One needs only consider the more difficult situation the US and its allies would have found themselves in if Turkey during this conflict had been neutral or even hostile to the West. Without a doubt, such a scenario would have made the allied effort a more costly and lengthy one. The Gulf War demonstrated Turkey’s importance to the West both as a military staging area into the Middle East and also as a crucial ally in the Muslim World.

Following the Gulf War, Turkey stepped up efforts to build stronger relations with its ethnic and linguistic kin in the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Balkans in order to serve as a westernizing influence to neighboring Islamic republics transitioning to post-Communist societies.<sup>11</sup> Encouraging Turkey to assume such a larger regional leadership, Europe and in particular the US, hoped that Turkey’s secular republicanism might provide emergent Muslim states an alternative model than that of Iranian theocracy. Although advancing such Pan-Turkic or Pan-Islamic themes had long been frowned upon by their founding father Mustafa Kemal Attatürk, Turkish leaders today have enthusiastically assumed a new role as the leading westernizing influence in the region. Reflecting this newfound awareness of ethnic identity, leaders of Turkic-speaking republics in Central Asia and Bosnia-Herzegovina and Albania in the Balkans flocked to Ankara in 1991 and 1992 to discuss how their cultural commonalties might transfer into greater economic and political cooperation.<sup>12</sup> As a result of such meetings, Turkey signed over 160 protocols and cooperative agreements with six former

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<sup>9</sup> Larrabee. Stephen F. U.S. and European Policy toward Turkey and the Caspian Basin. Santa Monica: RAND, 1998. 144.

<sup>10</sup> Sterns, Monteagle. Entangled Allies: U.S. Policy toward Greece, Turkey, and Cyprus. New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1992. 51.

<sup>11</sup> Sezer 73.

<sup>12</sup> Sezer.

Soviet republics of Muslim heritage. Moreover, Turkey has pledged more than \$886 million in credits to the Central Asian region alone and has worked to build infrastructural ties in transport and telecommunications to extend its financial and business contacts and to reinforce cultural relations by developing scholarships and student exchange programs.<sup>13</sup> Still, adapting to its new role as a regional leader, Turkey is just now scratching the surface of its capacity to promote free trade and guide nearby Islamic populations to their brand of secular democracy.

One significant sign of its potential to serve as an exemplar of economic liberalism and democracy to Central Asian and Balkan Muslims, is Turkey's founding of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC). On 25 June 1992, Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Moldavia, Romania, Russia, Turkey, and the Ukraine signed the declaration of the BSEC ostensibly committing these countries to a regional and multilateral cooperation based upon free market economic principles.<sup>14</sup> In theory the BSEC was to encourage political stability and economic well being through commercial collaboration. These states, most of whom are desperately trying to implement liberal economic reforms, hope to take advantage of their geographic proximity and construct an alliance for more open trade and mutual economic assistance. However, as well intentioned as BSEC was in its conception, Turkey was and remains too economically weak to provide the effective leadership and aid to so many needy transitioning countries.<sup>15</sup> More importantly however, the BSEC illustrates Turkey's desire to expand its regional presence and perhaps its yet untapped potential as a far-reaching westernizing and stabilizing influence. As will be more discussed in the next

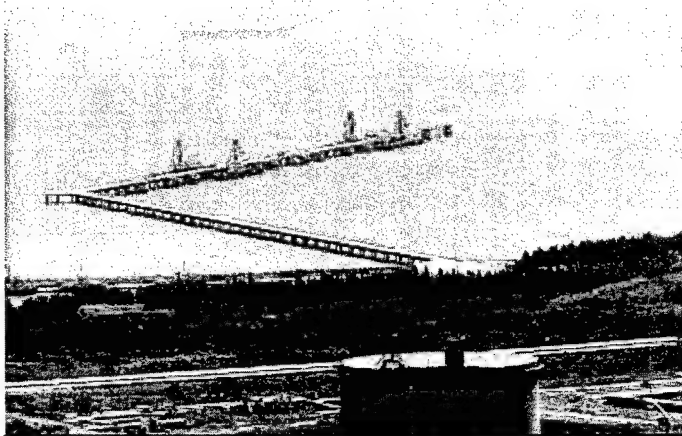
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<sup>13</sup> Sezer 104-105.

<sup>14</sup> Sezer 179.

<sup>15</sup> Pankov, Valentin. FBIS Document 19990211000093. *Free Trade in the Black Sea: States in Region Form New Economic Zone*. Moscow Nezavisimaya Gazeta 10 Feb. 1999. 6.

chapter, resolving the Greco-Turkish feud using the EU's economic clout might not only release Turkey's now unrealized promise as a pillar of Westernism and regional stability, but Greece's as well.



**Figure 2.5** Oil Terminal at the Turkish Mediterranean port of Ceyhan. The 1100-mile long Baku-Ceyhan oil pipeline project is strongly supported by the Turkish and U.S. governments as strategically safer than pipelines through Georgia or Iran. Photo from Woodrow Wilson School of Public Policy and Int'l Affairs Princeton University Online.

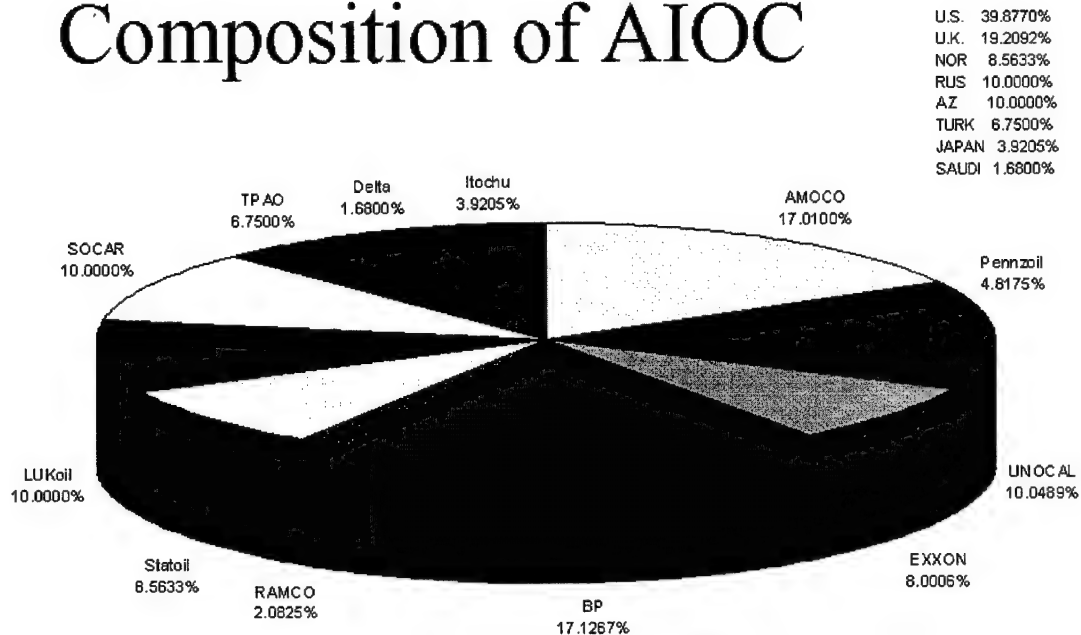
<sup>16</sup> With access to Caspian Basin oil reserves, some estimating to be equivalent in size to that of Kuwait or Saudi Arabia, Turkey's regional clout and significance to the West is rapidly rising. Oil deposits in Turkey's neighboring Azerbaijan, Karakhstan, and Turkmenistan alone have been estimated to be worth more than

\$2 trillion.<sup>17</sup> As has proven to be the case in the Persian Gulf, the struggle to control such a possibly vast and vital energy resource will undoubtedly escalate in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and make Turkey an increasingly strategic and powerful ally in the area. Expecting to cash in on what appears to be the last great oil boom, dozens of international oil-producing corporations have flocked to the Caspian region (fig 2.6 next page). With the US and Europe pushing to have a pipeline running from Baku, Azerbaijan to the Turkish Mediterranean port of Ceyhan, Turkey is increasingly commanding the same if not more attention as it did shoring of

<sup>16</sup> Feiveson, Harold. *WWS 401: Energy, Environment and the Caspian States Fall*. Woodrow Wilson School of Public Policy and International Affairs at Princeton University Online Course. Fall 1988. <http://www.wws.princeton.edu/~wws401c/>



# Composition of AIOC



**Figure 2.6:** Caspian Basin Oil Boom? AIOC (Azerbaijan International Operating Company). The 12-company consortium led by BP-Amoco hopes to benefit from potentially vast oil reserves in the area adjacent to Turkey. Graph from *WWS 401: Energy, Environment and the Caspian States*. Woodrow Wilson School of Public Policy and Int'l Affairs at Princeton University Online

(<sup>18</sup>↑) NATO's southern flank during the Cold War. Given Turkey's ever expanding strategic importance, the need to keep it securely in the Western fold demands greater effort—especially in light of the threat of rising anti-Western Islamist voices within Turkish society. As a potentially vital transit point for oil and gas outside of the Persian Gulf and as a westernizing influence to transitioning Islamic nations in Central Asia and beyond, included among its many other strengths, Turkey's value to the West still remains largely untapped.

## Greece: The Western Pillar of the Greek-Turkish Model

Were it not for its preoccupation with its old Turkish enemy, Greece also might be employing its considerable potential as a stabilizing force in the Balkans. With cultural ties

<sup>17</sup> Pratap, Chatterjee. *Scramble for the Caspian: Big Oil Looks to Divvy Up Caspian Sea Oil Riches*. *Multinational Monitor* Sept. 1998. 16-21.

<sup>18</sup> Feiveson.

to its “Orthodox brothers” in Serbia, Bulgaria, and Romania and its EU and NATO memberships, Greece like Turkey should be a regional model to its former communist neighbors. Yet, since Greek foreign policy remains fixated upon thwarting alleged Turkish inroads into this region, instead of calming the hostilities following the breakup of Yugoslavia, Greece has, if anything only added to it. As was the case with Turkey, the West’s primary concern regarding Greece for the duration of the Cold War was that it remained a functioning part of its NATO’s southern flank against the Soviet expansionism. The mounting costs of the West’s failure to sufficiently address Greece’s preoccupation with its Turkish enemy are now becoming apparent.



**Figure 2.7** “Double-headed eagle” symbol of the Greek Orthodox Church. Image from Greek Orthodox Church Athens Greece Online.

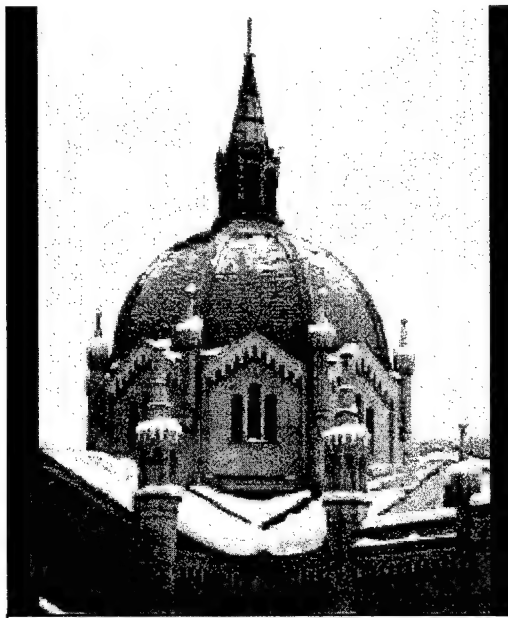
<sup>19</sup> Considering Greece’s remarkable recent successes in implementing a program of economic liberalization and its strong ties to Orthodox peoples throughout the Balkans, Greece like Turkey represents a potentially dynamic Western exemplar for nearby former Communist countries. As a “double-headed eagle, with one head in Western Europe and the other in the Balkans” Theodore Couloumbis writes, Greece with ties to its Orthodox kin in Serbia, Bulgaria, and Romania could be a powerful presence for the West within a strategic and volatile region.<sup>20</sup> These

cultural ties were evident during the recent upheaval in Bosnia in which Greece consistently came to the support of Serbia, much to the consternation of its NATO allies. In

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<sup>19</sup> *Double Headed Eagle Symbol*. Ecclesia: Othordox Church of Greece Online. 22 Apr. 1999 <http://www.ecclesia.gr>.

addition to substantial ethnic and religious links into the Balkans, Greece has recently demonstrated its potential to serve as model to its former communist neighbors as they try to implement liberal economic reforms. In the last few years, in its zeal to take part in the European Monetary Union (EMU), Greece has made astounding progress improving the health of its historically state-dominated economy. With its EU membership and its cultural ties, Greece stands alongside Turkey as one of the best possible instruments the West has to stabilize the region both politically and economically.



**Figure 2.8:** Serbian Orthodox Church in the city of Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina. Representative of Greek Orthodox pervasive ties in the Balkans. Photo from Encarta Encyclopedia CD-ROM 1997.

<sup>21</sup> Tragically however, Greece has not been this imagined positive influence in the Balkans, but just the opposite. Greece's staunchly pro-Serbia policies instead of helping bring peace to the area have confounded Western efforts to reign in Serbia's aggressive irredentist aims. Although Greece might not have been capable of preventing the breakup of Yugoslavia as one regional analyst wrote, "...they could perhaps of prevented it from radicalizing and polarizing Balkan politics to the extent that it has."<sup>22</sup> Due to their fixation with their Turkish neighbor, rather than being a positive influence, Greece

<sup>20</sup> Bahcheli, Tozun, and Theodore A. Couloumbis, and Patricia Carley, eds. Greek-Turkish Relations and U.S. Foreign Policy: Cyprus, the Aegean, and Regional Stability. Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace, 1997. 9.

<sup>21</sup> *Serbian Orthodox Church in Sarajevo, Bosnia*. . Encarta Encyclopedia. Microsoft Corporation. CD-ROM. Washington. 1997.

<sup>22</sup> Sezer 84.

foreign policy in regard to the Balkans has been a thorn in the West's side. Greece's diplomacy toward the imbroglio in the former Yugoslavia was and continues to be dominated by their single-minded aim of denying Turkey any opportunity of attracting any new allies or greater influence in the Balkans. In particular, Greece was uneasy with the prospect of any new Muslim states or autonomous provinces such as the ones it saw possibly emerging in Bosnia or even today in Kosovo. The fear of such Islamic entity or entities arising encouraged worst-case scenarios for a Greek state inclined to assume that any such Muslim state would be friendly to Turkey. As a result, Serbia and Bosnian Serbs were granted near cart blanche support in their struggle because of what Bosnian Muslims were seen to symbolize—a dangerous extension of Turkey's expansionist schemes.<sup>23</sup> This Greek compulsion to obstruct anything that might possibly benefit Turkey is but one harmful ramification of the enduring Greco-Turkish conflict. Despite this conflicts many harmful effects and despite the many signs that a Greece and Turkey in accord might serve European and US interests in a multitude of ways, the West continues to neglect this old argument.

#### **Underestimating the Greek-Turkish Conflict: The Costs of the Western Neglect**

Since at least the onset of the Cold War after WWII, the US and its European Allies have had little trouble putting Greece and Turkey and their endless quarrels on the backburner. Finding itself thrust into the role of Western leadership, the US early on decided to turn its attention away from the Near East and focus on Europe. Although Communist activity in the region did lead the US to establish the "Truman Doctrine" as a license to intercede when it saw Greece and Turkey threatened, the area as a whole was generally granted a lesser focus. According to one statement by Major General Lyman Lemnitzer, Deputy Chief of Staff of US Armed Force in 1950, higher priorities in other areas made it impossible to devote any

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid. p. 83.

substantial portion of the US's limited resources to this region.<sup>24</sup> The US and its NATO allies were preoccupied with higher issues such as the USSR's acquisition of nuclear weapons, the loss of China to communism, and an East-West standoff in Berlin. Throughout the Cold War, Turkey and Greece were counted on to prevent a Soviet attack into the Mediterranean, the Caucasus, or one emanating from the Balkans. The fact that Greek and Turkish armaments were often pointed more at each other than at a common foe to the north was overlooked so long as the West's overall containment strategy stood firm. Yet, this Cold War myopia has now come back to haunt the NATO alliance now devoid of its old enemy. In the process of being so pre-occupied with the USSR, as Monteagle Stearns writes, "we learned little about the countries that did the containing...disregarding their own foreign policy concerns when they did not coincide with ours."<sup>25</sup> In the turmoil following the demise of the Soviet Union, the West again has not been able to catch its breath as it tries to absorb former Communist Block nations into NATO, stem the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and keep a lid on a series of regional conflicts. While the US and its allies move to address traditional concerns, settling the less publicized Greek-Turkish feud continues to receive comparatively scant resources.

When the Greek-Turkish dispute gets such comparatively low priority from the US and Europe much less the rest of the World, it is no wonder this enduring conflict has not been resolved. Compared to the attention and effort the US and its global partners have invested in bringing peace to such perennial hot spots as the Middle East, Northern Ireland, and the former Yugoslavia, the Greek-Turkish conflict is but an afterthought (fig 2.9). Capturing this sentiment, Greek Foreign Minister Ionannis Kasoulides recently stated in an interview:

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<sup>24</sup> Sezer 46.

<sup>25</sup> Stearns 3.

...the United States is investing so much to achieve peace in the Balkans and peace in the Middle East, it is inconceivable, if they want stability in that part of the world, to leave aside the triangle of Greece-Turkey-Cyprus and leave open a wound in the southeastern flank of NATO. This doesn't make sense.<sup>26</sup>



**Figure 2.9: Western Leaders...Attending Greater Needs?** Above Western leaders seen expending tremendous diplomatic energy addressing matters considered of critical importance. Yet, what if the Greek-Turkish crisis received the same level of attention? (left) Clinton at signing of Mid-East Oslo agreement (upper right) Prime Minister Tony Blair addressing turmoil in Northern Ireland (lower right) US Special Envoy Richard Holbrooke in negotiations with Serbia's Slobodan Milosovic. (AP Wire Photos Online)

<sup>27</sup>In all fairness, the US has been at the vanguard of advocating peace between Greece and Turkey and there have also been a myriad of relatively low-key UN-sponsored peace initiatives directed toward this stubborn Aegean argument, most primarily focused upon resolving the Cyprus issue. However, the

Greek foreign minister is right. The West's attention, which increasingly is controlled by global media sources, has not been focused on the tedious low-intensity hostilities between Greece and Turkey. Given the steady flow images showing butchery in Kosovo, biological weapons in Iraq, open nuclear rivalry in India and Pakistan and a recent outbreak of anti-American terrorism in Africa, it is little wonder Western leaders have little time to ponder alternative strategies for peace. With current trends pointing toward only more civil and inter-cultural wars, common sense suggests however that current Western policies have failed and need to be replaced with different, perhaps bolder ones.

<sup>26</sup> Interview with Ioannis Kosoulides. *The Dallas Morning News* Sunday Reader Feb 28, 1999: 10J.

<sup>27</sup> *Attending Greater Needs?* Yahoo! News – AP International Photos Online. 25 Apr. 1999. <http://dailynews.yahoo.com/headlines/g/wl/>

In particular, European strategies addressing the Greek-Turkish conflict have not only thus far failed to bring any denouement, but have been dangerously counterproductive. At this time Europe appears to have sided with Greece in using pressure tactics to compel Turkey into compliance on a variety of Greek-Turkish disputes, the Cyprus issue in particular. For example, current negotiations to make Cyprus an EU member have not worked to make Greece or Turkey more amenable to a settlement, but just the opposite. Instead of becoming conciliatory, Turkey has threatened to assimilate Northern Cyprus as one of its own provinces if the EU continues its plan to admit southern Greek Cyprus if Turkish Cyprus refuses to participate in ongoing talks. In addition, Greece has escalated tensions with Turkey through a series of provocative military procurements. With a large increase in its defense budget, Greece has tried to force a change in the Greek-Turkish impasse by expanding military facilities and threatening the installation of long-range Soviet surface-to-air missiles on the island of Cyprus. While Greece may have legal right to take such actions, and Europe may be right to support Greece by highlighting Turkey's defiance of international law, such pressure tactics have only made Turkey harden its stance. Overall however, as Europe and Greece persist with flawed pressure tactics and as the West fails to harness Greece and Turkey's dormant potential, the threats to stability, within and without Europe, continue to mount.

There is considerable evidence that the cost of failing to resolve the Greek-Turkish feud is far greater than the West has acknowledged. Foremost, there is a disturbing lack of consensus between the EU and the US on how to handle this old Aegean imbroglio, which bodes ill for the West's future capacity to contain increasing regional conflicts. As a result of this lack of unanimity, the Eastern Mediterranean has come under greater peril not only from an

escalating arms race between Greece and Turkey, but also from an accelerating flow weapons into the entire region. Added to rising tensions in and around the Aegean, the West confronts the growing possibility that Greece and Turkey might enter into armed conflict or at a minimum, further disrupt an already menacing area of turmoil. Furthermore, as the strain between these two NATO allies increases, the Western alliance's ability to carry out collective military and peace missions is undermined. Not only is NATO debilitated by this persevering Greek-Turkish antagonism, but more importantly, this quarrel increases the odds that Turkey might some day become detached from the West, or worse, overtaken from within by Islam's growing political voice.

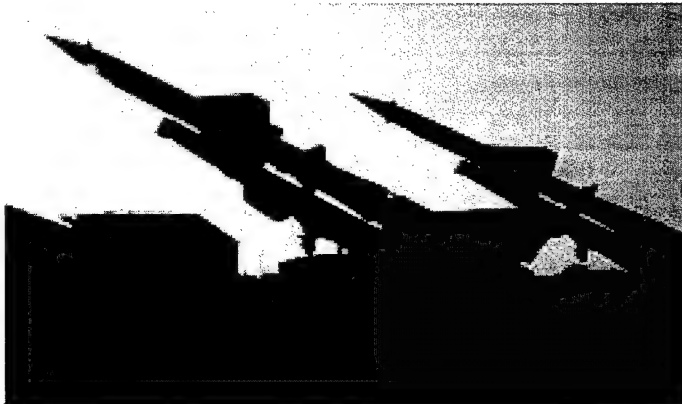
Today, US and European political-economic and political-military approaches to Mediterranean security and to the Greek-Turkish dispute in particular are dangerously disconnected. In particular, Western policies on political-economic issues are centered in the EU whereas political-military policy making takes place either in NATO or is largely a function of US defense planning.<sup>28</sup> Differing approaches between the US and Europe to the Greek-Turkish dispute point to the dangerous absence of a strategic approach to regional security, one that integrates both political-economic and political-military components. To illustrate, the US has long struggled with the EU's reticence to supplement NATO military efforts with its economic might in order to bring these old Aegean foes together. Specifically, the US State Department through its Special Envoy Richard Holbrooke has repeatedly pressed the EU to be more aggressive in bringing Turkey into its economic fold, perhaps even offering it full EU membership as a means to achieving greater regional

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<sup>28</sup> *Security: New Challenges, New Tasks. NATO Review* Asmus, Ronald D., Stephen F Larrabee. and Ian O. Lesser. *Mediterranean* May. 1996: Vol. 44, No. 3. 25-31.



stability.<sup>29</sup> Yet, seeing Turkey as something less than truly European, the EU has been hesitant to consent to anything beyond an economic customs union. If the West's political-economic and political-military approaches remain bifurcated, in particular in regard to Greece and Turkey, the prospect for peace across a vast area only worsens.



**Figure 2.10:** Junked SA-2 Surface-to-Air Missile. In the post-Cold War era, there has been a marked escalation in the spread of advanced and not-so-advanced weaponry globally as the former USSR sells both its new and old armaments to raise hard currency. Photo of Russian missile from Corbis Online.

<sup>30</sup> As Europe and the US disagree on how to realize a greater regional stability, Greece and Turkey go on contributing to an unprecedented arms buildup in the Eastern Mediterranean—one that steadily raises the potential for open conflict. While armies and fleets are being reduced throughout the

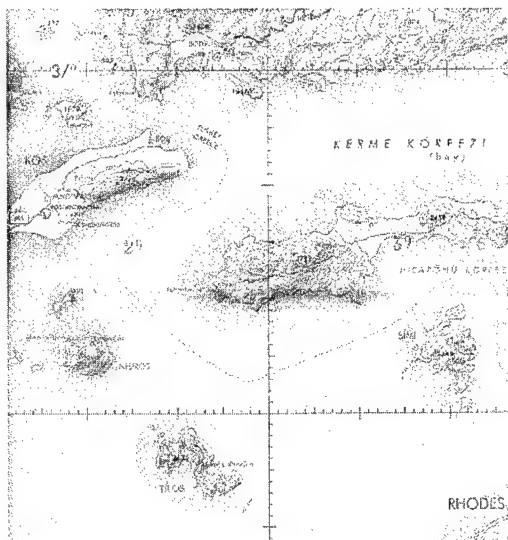
Western world according to one Washington Time's report, "Turkey, Greece and Cyprus are purchasing sophisticated weapons systems at considerable cost to their already strained budgets."<sup>31</sup> Adding to this mix, arms purchases in the Aegean Sea region run rampant, with neighboring Syria, Egypt, Libya and Algeria taking more sophisticated weapons into their already dangerous arsenals of ballistic missiles. With a huge quantity of arms still remaining

<sup>29</sup> Holbrooke's Stand. FBIS Document NC0805153598. *The Cyprus Weekly*, Nicosia, May 8 1998. 4.

<sup>30</sup> Raymer, Steve. *Junked SA-2 Missile*. Corbis Online. 24 Feb. 1994. 29 Apr. 1999 www.corbis.com

<sup>31</sup> Anderson, James H., and James Phillips. *Averting War between Greece and Turkey*. *The Washington Times*, 9 Oct. 1998: A18.

outside the 1990 Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, Greece and Turkey's own considerable arms purchases further heighten regional volatility.<sup>32</sup>



**Figure 2.11: Imia/Kardak Islets.** Yellow arrow points to Imia/Kardak, rocky twin islets just off the coast off the SW coast of Turkey and less than 2 NM from another Greek island nearly led to a Greek-Turkish war in 1996. Copy of USAF Map found online at: [www.mfa.gr/foreign/bilateral/](http://www.mfa.gr/foreign/bilateral/)

<sup>33</sup> Greece and Turkey today are inching closer to an armed conflict that would complicate and compound existing instabilities from the Balkans to Central Asia. Highlighting the Aegean's current combustibility was Greece and Turkey's January 1996 clash over the twin uninhabited Aegean islets named Imia (Turkish: Kardak). Located 1.9 nautical miles from the Greek island of Kalymnos and 3.65 nautical miles off the southwestern coastline of Turkey, this rocky outcrop comprising some 12-acres of dry land hardly seems anything to go to war

over (fig 2.11). Yet, echoing similar Greek-Turkish confrontations related to Aegean oil exploration rights in 1976 and 1987, had it not been for the intervention of the US, this incident might have escalated into full-scale war.<sup>34</sup> Augmenting this current territorial hypersensitivity are Greece's recent efforts to disrupt the balance of power with arms purchases and a recent flurry of heated rhetoric over Greece's alleged sheltering of Abdullah Ocalan, the infamous terrorist leader of the Kurdish Worker's Party (PKK). Greece has made it no secret that they intend on disrupting the status quo with such provocation as their recent

<sup>32</sup> Korop, Marcia Christoff. *Greece and Turkey: Can They Mend Fences?* *Foreign Affairs* Jan/Feb. 1998: 7-12.

<sup>33</sup> *Map of Imia Rocks: USAF Pilotage Map.* Hellenic Republic: Ministry of Foreign Affairs Online. 10 Apr. 1999 <http://www.mfa.gr/foreign/bilateral/>

effort to install long-range Russian surface-to-air missiles on Cyprus. They were forced to back down and put them on Crete when Turkey threatened war. Likewise, Turkey has arguably tried to disrupt Greece's progress in successfully joining the European Monetary Union by trying to create an international uproar by accusing Greece of both secretly harboring of Ocalan and of being sponsors of a terrorist organization. As tensions and rhetoric escalates and the US and Europe have repeatedly had to intervene to prevent the two sides from coming to blows. However, the risk is increasing that the West will not always be able to intercede and prevent a Greek-Turkish collision that would be damaging not only to NATO, but also to the stability of a much broader area.

As the result of their persistent argument, Greece and Turkey diminish NATO's ability to conduct both defensive and offensive military operations. The capacity of NATO member-states to exercise together regularly is crucial for their preparation to function successfully in any future joint operational setting. Years of joint military exercises by most NATO members was cited by allied military leaders as one of the principal reasons for the smoothness with which Operation Desert Storm was carried out.<sup>35</sup> Yet, had the Western Alliance's operations in the Gulf War been dependent upon Greece and Turkey, its success would have certainly been delayed if not jeopardized. Not only do Greek and Turkish armed forces not exercise together regularly, but the last Aegean military exercise conducted by NATO in which Greece permitted its forces to cooperate with Turkey was in spring of 1982.<sup>36</sup> The fact that Greek and Turkish weaponry, instead of being prepared to serve NATO needs, have more often been trained at each other across the Aegean threatens the

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<sup>34</sup> Bahcheli, Coloumbis, and Carley ix.

<sup>35</sup> Sterns 70.

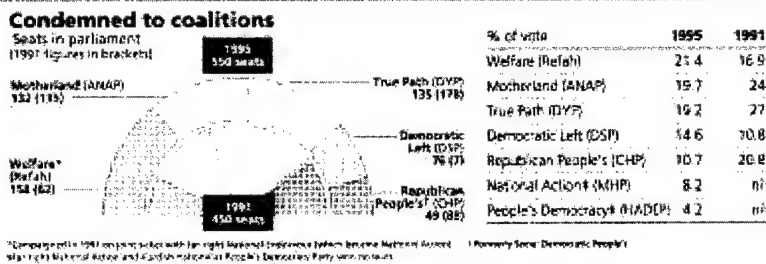
<sup>36</sup> *Greece Country Study*. The University of Texas at Austin Library Lexis-Nexis: Country Profiles. Oct. 25 1998 [http://web.lexis-nexis.com/universe/form/academic/univ\\_centryprof.html](http://web.lexis-nexis.com/universe/form/academic/univ_centryprof.html) 27-28

future capacity of the West's flagship defensive alliance. If a situation should ever arise, where Greek and Turkish cooperation were essential to the execution of some NATO peace-keeping or offensive operation, the success of any such mission would be in question. With NATO now coming out of its purely defensive role and taking on a much more active role in the region, the West can no longer afford to have Greece and Turkey at each other's throats.

The persisting Greek-Turkish conflict has contributed to Turkey's isolation from the West and thereby increased the danger that this crucial NATO ally might eventually reject its Western secular democracy to become an Islamic Republic. Although US Defense and State Department analysts monitoring Turkish political situation discount the possibility that Turkey might abandon Atatürk's Western vision, the political influence of Islam in Turkey continues to expand. A consensus of these Turkey analysts, while they acknowledge the rising power of Islam in Turkey, they point to the historically intervening hand of this nation's powerful military and anti-religious prohibitions of its 1982 constitution as strong proof that Turkey could never turn back to Islam.<sup>37</sup> However, there also is mounting evidence that this popular assertion that Turkey is "too Western" to revert to an Islamic political model may be overstated. Although the Turkish military and secular forces in Turkey recently succeeded in having the Islamist Refah (Welfare) Party banned (only to come back under another name), the growing support Muslim candidates have recently received at the polls mark an alarming trend.<sup>38</sup> Gaining steadily at the polls, Refah received its biggest share of the vote (21%) and its highest number of parliamentary seats in 1995

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<sup>37</sup> In January of 1999, I had a telephone conversation with Ian O. Lesser, a senior analyst at the RAND Corporation, a public policy think tank in Santa Monica California, about the threat of Islam to Turkey. He related what he believed to be the general sentiment of most Turkey watchers, that secularism and Western tradition were too imbedded for Turkey to revert to some Islamic model. Several other Turkey analysts at RAND expressed similar opinions via email.



**Figure 2.12: Islam's Increasing Political Might?** Chart demonstrates the rise in political clout of the Islamist Refah political party in Turkey. Upper right hand corner shows how Refah's share of the vote increased from 16.9% in 1991 to 21.4% in 1995.

<sup>39</sup>elections (see fig

2.12). Islamist

political organizations

today continue to

show significant

success in tapping

grassroots support in

poorer urban neighborhoods in Ankara and Istanbul as well as in rural areas. Further indicating the hidden strength of Islam in Turkey, Dr. Sinasi Aksoy, head of the Political Science Department at Middle Eastern Technical University, Ankara, stated that if given the chance, some 70% of Turkish citizens in polls stated they would choose an Islamic form of government if given the option.<sup>40</sup> Contributing to the vigor of this rising Islamic voice has been the West's rejection of Turkey from the EU and a slew of apparent anti-Turkish actions including several related to the Greek-Turkish dispute. In particular the EU's effort to assimilate Cyprus as a full member while continuing to reject Turkey have added greatly to Turkey's feeling that they will never be a part of Europe's "Christian Club." Yet, bringing Turkey fully into the EU and resolving this tireless conflict between Greece and Turkey are essential to solidifying Turkey as a geo-strategically important westernizing force on Europe's southeastern flank. If Turkey were to turn to an Islamic form of government

<sup>38</sup> Gulalp. Haldun. *Political Islam in Turkey: The Rise and Fall of the Refah Party*. *The Muslim World* Jan. 1999: v89. 22.

<sup>39</sup> *Turkey: A Fundamental Shift?* *The Economist* US Edition. 8 Jun. 1996: v339 S5.

<sup>40</sup> While studying Turkish at Middle Eastern Technical University (METU) in Ankara Turkey, during the summer of 1998, I interviewed Dr. Sinasi Aksoy about the current political issues in Turkey. It was during this interview that he indicated that were it not for the prohibitions of the 1982 constitution written under the auspice of the Turkish military, most Turks would choose Islamic government.

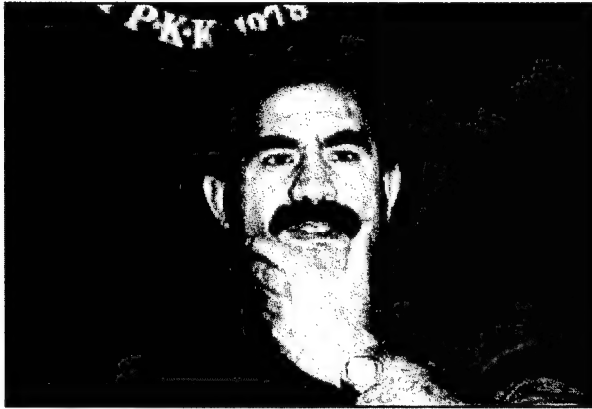
incalculable damage would be done to Western interests from controlling Central Asian oil pipelines to a maintaining overall stability in the Mediterranean region.

The Greek-Turkish conflict represents both an opportunity and a threat to the West's NATO alliance. In the new post-Cold War milieu old and deep-seated inter-cultural animosities have reemerged and the West needs to develop a new approach to keep them from causing widespread war. Specifically, Europe and the US must unite in an effort to transform Greece and Turkey from persistent foes to partners forming a revolutionary model of cross-cultural harmony and economic cooperation. Both Turkey and Greece are strategically positioned with ethnic ties and budding economies to become positive and westernizing pillars of stability for a region extending from the former Yugoslavia to the borders of China. Current Western approaches to the ethnic and religious bloodshed in such places as Kosovo provide only temporary pauses in violence and do not provide lasting hope of peace. The West instead needs to build bridges across reemerging cultural cleavages, such as it can with the Greek-Turkish dispute—if the West does otherwise, it is only courting disaster.

### **Chapter Three: The EU as the Catalyst for Greek-Turkish Accord**

The European Union (EU) has the power to transform the Greek-Turkish quarrel into a regional archetype for inter-cultural détente. Although the deep-seated animosities between Greeks and Turks appear irresolvable, using its economic and political clout, the EU can bridge the differences between these historical foes. On the one hand, the notion of using business ties to improve strained international relations is not a new one and recently has even been applied in US-European efforts to begin a reconciliation between Greek and Turkish Cypriots. Yet, rather than on divided Cyprus, it is between Europe and Turkey that a grander process of Greek-Turkish reconciliation must begin—the crucial first step being to provide Turkey a definitive path to EU membership. Affirming Turkey's course toward EU participation would strengthen Turkey's democracy, bolster its economy, affirm its Western identity and most importantly, make it more amenable to settling disputes with Greece. Presently however, many EU member-states present valid objections as to why Turkey should not be granted EU membership. Yet, when these obstacles are weighed against the opportunity to establish an enduring peace for Europe and beyond, they quickly pale in significance. Ultimately, as the EU confronts the threat of rising ethno-religious instability both within and without its boundaries, it is in Europe's interest and that of the entire West to remake the persistent Greek-Turkish feud into a far-reaching exemplar of inter-cultural peace.

Although the daily rhetoric between Greece and Turkey seems to reflect an insurmountable bitterness, the universal language of commercial relations offers hope for a greater amity. Reading the harsh exchange of rhetoric between Greeks and Turks in their daily newspapers and observing the manner in which even Greek and Turkish diplomats lambaste each other, one could easily assume there exists little hope for harmony between



**Figure 3.1:** Abdullah Ocalan, Kurdish Worker's Party (PKK) leader and accused terrorist was apprehended in March of 1999 and turned over to Turkish authorities in Nairobi, Africa. His arrest led to heightened Greek-Turkish acrimony as Turkey charged Greece with sheltering Ocalan and abetting PKK terrorism both in and outside Turkey. Photo from Kurdistan Info Center Online.

<sup>1</sup>these enduring foes. To illustrate, during the recent crisis over Greece's role in allegedly harboring PKK (Kurdish Worker's Party) terrorist leader, Abdullah Ocalan, the level of caustic discourse between Greece and Turkey reached the point of near hysteria. "Greece must be declared a terrorist nation!" declared Rustu Kazim Yucelen, Secretary General of Turkey's Motherland Political Party (ANAP) and

as he called his government to sever its already limited ties with Greece.<sup>2</sup> Later, another ANAP leader responding to a simultaneous PKK attack in which 13 Turks lost their lives claimed, "Greece, which has extended support to the PKK, is responsible for this massacre!"<sup>3</sup> Returning their own venom to Turkey's accusations, Greek officials dismissed such charges as "laughable." "Turkey's psychosis about supposed Greek-PKK relations is not new," claimed acting government spokesman Nikos Athanassakis recently as he went on to characterize such incriminations "propaganda."<sup>4</sup> Heated exchanges of this sort would lead a reasonable person to conclude that differences between such rankled antagonists are virtually

<sup>1</sup> Photo of Abdullah Ocalan. Kudistan Information Center Online. 14 Apr. 1999 <http://www.burn.ucsd.edu/~ats/APO/apo-bio.html>

<sup>2</sup> *BBP Call Greece 'Terrorist'*. FBIS document JN2802091899. ANAP, Ankara TRT Television Network. 1800 GMT 27 Feb. 1999.

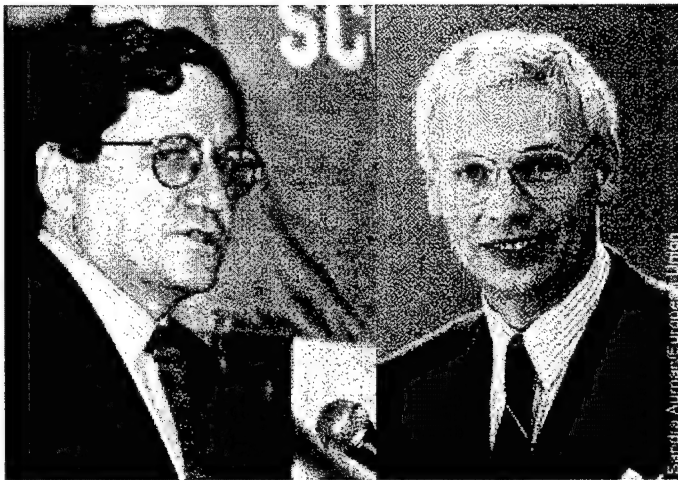
<sup>3</sup> *Okuyan on Elections, Greek Responsibility for 'Massacre.'* FBIS document TA1403145899. Ankara Anatolia Television Broadcast. 1152 GMT 14 Mar. 1999.

<sup>4</sup> *Greek Spokesman Discusses 'Laughable' Turkish Claims.* FBIS document NC2702150999. Athens News Agency on Internet. 1255 GMT 27 Feb. 1999.



beyond repair. Yet as irreparable as this virulent quarrel may seem, business relations provide the one means of communication these adversaries can use to circumvent centuries of acrimony. Arguably it would be futile for Greece and Turkey to attempt to negotiate healing to their many historical wounds. Instead, rapprochement can best be facilitated using the shared interest of commercial exchange. This is the path to a more positive dialogue and a growing mutual confidence.

This concept of using trade and commerce to foster democracy and improve frayed international relations is not a new one and even now is being applied, although somewhat inappropriately, within an US-European effort to diminish hostilities between Greek and



**Figure 3.2:** US Envoy Richard Holbrooke (left) and EU Commissioner Hans van den Broek (right), both are advocates for using relations between Turkish and Greek Cypriot Businessmen to create more positive exchanges that eventually might lead to a resolution of the enduring Cyprus impasse. Photos from European Union Magazine Online and Columbia University Record Online.

<sup>5</sup>Turkish Cypriots. Specifically,  
<sup>6</sup>US Special Envoy Richard Holbrooke and European Commissioner Hans van den Broek (fig 3.2) have promoted a series of meetings between Turkish and Greek Cypriot businessmen in an effort to bridge the island's intractable ethnic division. In 1997 at one such meeting in Brussels, van den Broek addressed these

<sup>5</sup> Barraso, Eileen. *Richard Holbrooke Photo*. Columbia University Record. 6 Feb 1998. 2 Apr. 1999. Vol 23, No. 14. [www.columbia.edu/cu/record/d/23/14/26.html](http://www.columbia.edu/cu/record/d/23/14/26.html)

<sup>6</sup> Auman, Sandra. *Van den Broek Photo*. European Union Magazine. 19 June 1996 [www.eurunion.org/magazine/9609p19jun96.htm](http://www.eurunion.org/magazine/9609p19jun96.htm)

businessmen stating, "The European Union has learned that conflicts which have rumbled on for decades and even centuries can be overcome...Reconciliation has been brought about through a process which started with economic cooperation."<sup>7</sup> Alongside van den Broek, US envoy Richard Holbrooke echoed the same theme saying, "We have seen all over the world, in China and Taiwan, in Ireland, in Greece and Macedonia that businessmen contribute to the lowering of tensions and an increase of communication."<sup>8</sup> Although Holbrooke and van den Broek have seized upon the correct approach, they have unfortunately focused their energies at the wrong point of the Greek-Turkish dispute. In this situation where Greece and Greek Cyprus do not even recognize the so-called Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) and are currently exercising an embargo against it, it is next to hopeless to expect efforts to establish greater economic cooperation to have significant impact upon this particular impasse. Rather, to use the power of commerce and trade to any real effect, the EU and the US must turn their attention toward erecting a greater economic bridge between Europe and Turkey.

The economic might of the EU is the critical catalyst to initiating a reconciliation process between Greece and Turkey. Greece and Turkey, with similar societal characteristics, both have until the present struggled to overcome like economic difficulties—yet, now there is one significant difference. The difference is that in contrast to Turkey's situation, Greece with the benefit of strong political guidance and financial assistance from the EU has of late made remarkable strides implementing a myriad of reforms. Like Greece, Turkey holds the promise of even greater reform successes if only it might see its EU membership status somewhere on the horizon. The EU has even greater leverage with Turkey because not only

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<sup>7</sup> *Cyprus Entrepreneurs Urged To Make Money, Not War*. FBIS document FTS19971115000102. Nicosia Cyprus Mail 15 Nov. 1997: 1-24.

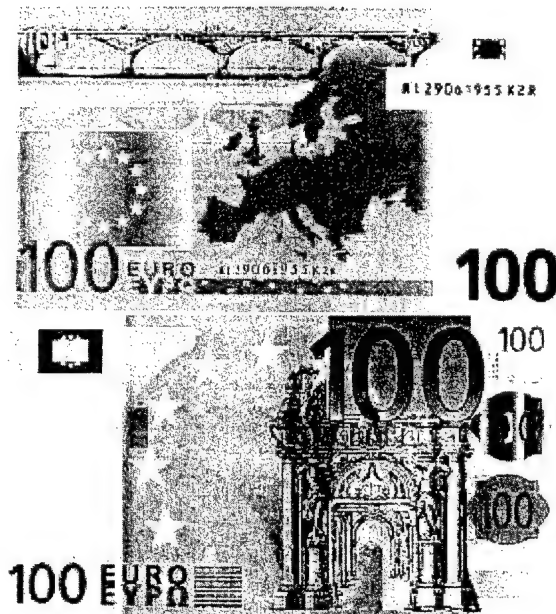
does the EU possess the economic and political guidance that Turkey needs, it can even more importantly provide it the long-sought consummation of its Western identity. In light of these factors and others, the EU has the ability to transform the Greek-Turkish antagonism into a powerful prototype for regional stability—it now must gather the courage to do so.

As Mediterranean neighbors, Greece and Turkey have confronted similar economic woes for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Both continue to tackle the structural problems inherent to traditionally state-run economies and both are striving to implement reforms necessary to prosper in an increasingly global marketplace. Together Greece and Turkey have shared high inflation, unemployment, urban concentration, a bloated public sector, large budget and trade deficits, and excessive foreign debt as persistent dilemmas.<sup>9</sup> In addition, electoral politics and bitter political divisions have also long prevented Greek and Turkish leaders from implementing measures needed to overcome systemic economic problems. As of late however, Greece has managed to break free of old habits and made astonishing progress toward invigorating its economy. This recent success can in large part be attributed to the EU's intervening hand. Joined with Greece's own determination to escape its economic doldrums, Greece's recent advances demonstrate that the political and financial clout of the EU can be the deciding factor in weaker nations' reform efforts.

As has been the case in Greece, a powerful synergy can be created when a nation's economic and political aspirations combine with a forceful patron such as the EU. Although Greece has been an EU member since 1983, only recently has it managed to cast aside its socialist heritage and capitalize on the large helping hand of its EU mentor. Particularly motivated by the hope of meeting the European Monetary Union (EMU) criteria, as outlined

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<sup>8</sup> *Cyprus Entrepreneurs Urged To Make Money, Not War.*



**Figure 3.3:** 100-EURO Bill. Greece, anxious to share Europe's currency in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century has made remarkable progress implementing economic reforms to meet EMU criteria. Image from Capital Hill EURO Lobby Online.

<sup>10</sup>by the 1992 Maastricht Treaty, Greece has lately had unexpected success reforming its economic and political institutions. At last, political interests across the ideological spectrum have concurred that adopting the EURO currency with other European states is central to their country's future economic health. Since 1992, this EURO carrot has brought Greece to make a number of painful although much needed economic reforms. For example, controls on profit

margins and price controls on most products have been abolished. Also as a result of stipulations attached to EU loans, Greece has moved decisively to address chronic problems such as widespread tax evasion and a bloated government payroll.<sup>11</sup> Likewise in its financial sector, faced with the daunting prospect of having to soon compete with European banks, Greece's predominately state-owned banks are frantically modernizing and streamlining their operations.<sup>12</sup> As a result of such efforts, the Greek economy is today moving in a very positive direction. Inflation rates have fallen from 12.3% at the end of 1993 to around 5% in April of 1998. In addition, central government deficits have declined as a portion of GDP

<sup>9</sup> Gianaris, Nicholas. *Greece and Turkey: Economic and Geopolitical Perspectives*. New York: Praeger, 1988. 1-5.

<sup>10</sup> *Image of EURO 100-Bill*. Capital Hill EURO Lobby Online. 14 Apr. 1999  
<http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/Lobby/5184/euro/index.htm>.

<sup>11</sup> *Greece Country Study*. The University of Texas at Austin Library Lexis-Nexis: Country Profiles. 18 Oct. 1998 [http://web.lexis-nexis.com/universe/form/academic/univ\\_centryprof.html](http://web.lexis-nexis.com/universe/form/academic/univ_centryprof.html) 27-28.

from 13.8% in 1993 to 4% in 1997 and economic growth has rebounded from a recession-like -1% in 1993 to a projected 4% for 1998.<sup>13</sup> Clearly, by providing the incentives, support and discipline within this EMU process, the EU has been the critical element spurring Greece to recent economic advances. In the face of Greece's success, with its similar characteristics and needs, could Turkey not make a similar or even greater breakthrough if provided full EU membership? More importantly, as discussed later, what further cascade of benefits might such an event deliver to the West?

Arguably more alluring than Greece's yearning to share the EURO currency are Turkey's aspirations to join EU as a culmination of their journey to become a Western nation. Describing this desire among the majority of Turkey political leadership, Meltem Muftuler-Bac writes:

...Turkish policy-makers tend to regard the European Union as the ultimate manifestation of European identity. Therefore closer ties with the Union are perceived to be a stamp of approval for Turkey's 'Europeanness.' The final step in this bid toward Europeanness seems to be Turkey's full membership in the EU.<sup>14</sup>

From the early Ottoman centuries, Turkish leaders considered their destiny linked to Europe. Dating back to 1453, when Turks rose from the Balkans to conquer Constantinople, they envisioned themselves as heading a new Roman Empire. This Western orientation was redoubled when General Mustafa Kemal, better known as Atatürk (fig 3.4), radically altered Turkish society with the intent of founding a Western secular society. Namely, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Atatürk dramatically pushed Turkey toward the West by banning the Islamic Caliphate, adopting the Latin alphabet and establishing a new legal system upon a Swiss civil

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<sup>12</sup> Hope, Kerin. *Facing A Test of Strength*. *The Banker* Jul 1997: v 147, n. 857, 34-37.

<sup>13</sup> Christodoulakis, Nicos M. *The Greek Economy Today*. Statement by Greek Deputy Minister of Finance Online. May 1998. 19 Oct 1998 [www.haba.org/GreeceEco.htm](http://www.haba.org/GreeceEco.htm)



**Figure 3.4:** Mustafa Kemal Attatürk, founding father of the modern Turkish Republic pulled his society toward Westernism by imposing radical socio-cultural reforms. Image from Gurbetçiler Online.

<sup>15</sup>code and a penal code taken from Mussolini.<sup>16</sup> After WWI, Turkey again showed its Western inclination by joining NATO and the Council of Europe. Still later in 1963, Turkey became an associate member of the EU and in 1996 concluded a customs union with the EU in hope of achieving the closer economic ties with Europe, which they had been promised in 1963. Yet, despite Turkey's continual efforts to draw closer to Europe, their search for unqualified Western acceptance has gone largely frustrated. Although the EU has made some effort toward economic outreach, their actions and rhetoric regarding Turkey's potential for full EU membership has worked to

weaken advocates for more Westernism and liberal reform within Turkey.

Despite its lukewarm treatment from Europe, the desire of recent Turkish administrations to fulfill Attatürk's vision through closer ties to the EU has already proven its capacity to surmount barriers to reform. For example, to remove Greece's veto to their forming a customs union with Europe in 1995, Prime Minister Tansu Çiller agreed both to lift her country's objection to EU membership negotiations with Cyprus and to push human rights legislation through her parliament.<sup>17</sup> If Turkey's leaders are willing to take such political risks, especially even those endorsed by their long-time enemy Greece, just to gain a customs union with the EU, what further gains might the expectation of full EU membership incite?

<sup>14</sup> Muftuler-Bac, Meltem. *The Never-Ending Story: Turkey and the European Union*. Middle Eastern Studies, Oct 1998: v 34 i4, 240.

<sup>15</sup> *Image of Mustafa Attatürk*. Gurbetçiler Online. 5 May 1997. 10 Apr 1999 [www.gurbetciler.com](http://www.gurbetciler.com)

<sup>16</sup> Plummer, Simon S. *Put Turkey in the Heart of Europe*. The Daily Telegraph 10 Dec 1997.

<sup>17</sup> *Who Made Promises to EU on Cyprus?* FBIS document NC2108091497. Istanbul Hurriyet, 21 Aug 1997.



**Figure 3.5:** Former Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Çiller agreed her administration would “overlook” negotiations to admit Cyprus in the EU if Greece would not veto an EU-Turkey Customs Union. Photo from PBS Online Newshour.

<sup>18</sup>In comparison to their desire for a customs union with the EU, Turkish leaders have been far more adamant in demanding their nation's right to full EU membership. This persistent longing for future EU participation was evident even after Çiller had gained a stronger economic association with Europe, when in 1997 she asserted that, “If Turkey is not given the status of a full member, a new Berlin Wall will have been created.”<sup>19</sup>

Half-measures short of full EU participation simply will not suffice. In light of Turkey’s longing to unite with Europe, the lure of EU membership is just the powerful catalyst that the

West should employ to ultimately create a greater regional stability.

A design for Turkey’s future EU membership conceivably would bring about a chain reaction of positive events, all contributing to an increased possibility for a Greek-Turkish détente. First, Turkey inclusion into the EU would go a long way toward unifying Turkey’s fragmented political scene and providing the political authority Westernizers there need to implement difficult economic and political reforms. Secondly, such an embrace by the EU would guarantee Turkey’s continued Western orientation and more firmly anchor it as an increasingly crucial part of the NATO alliance. Thirdly, Turkey’s full EU participation would ultimately better Greek-Turkish relations by creating between these old foes the positive atmosphere necessary to reach accord. Lastly, through this conceptual accord, both Greece and Turkey would be freed to release their considerable economic potential and as more effective Western allies, serve in tandem as inter-cultural pillars of regional stability.

<sup>18</sup> *Video Still of Tansu Çiller*. PBS Online Newshour. 24 Sept. 1996. 18 Apr 1999 [www.pbs.org](http://www.pbs.org).

By opening its door to Turkey's EU membership, Europe wields the power to promote a stronger more Western-leaning leadership within Turkey and thereby allow Turkey to emerge from the current political paralysis. Due to a succession of weak and unstable coalition governments, Turkey's democratic system has lacked both the political will and authority to implement tough economic reforms or in particular, take bold actions toward resolving its disputes with Greece. One US Institute of Peace study described the lack of resolute political leadership asserting that, "Under current conditions, any number of actors, from the media to the military, are able to take actions that influence Turkey's relations with Greece, either directly or indirectly."<sup>20</sup> Unlike the days when Turkey's Atatürk could risk reaching out to his Greek counterpart Venizelos and sign the 1930 Greek-Turkish Friendship Treaty, the political scene in Turkey today is fractured, with no single leader or political party able to shoulder the costs of painful reforms or aggressive diplomatic endeavors. However, it is highly possible that the individual or party that could take credit for gaining Turkey's membership in the EU might quickly amass the political capital necessary to launch bold new agendas. Expressing a widely-held sentiment among the many liberalizing Turks who have recognized this potential within EU membership, Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Çiller in 1997 stated, "The perspective of accession in the foreseeable future would both strengthen the hand and increase the motivation of pro-democracy reformers."<sup>21</sup> Senior RAND Corporation analyst Ian Lesser echoed Çiller's argument writing that Turkey's incorporation into the EU would, "...confirm and reinvigorate the Western-looking Atatürkist tradition and

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<sup>19</sup> *Turkey's Çiller on 'Identical' Criteria for EU Membership*. FBIS document TA143201697. Ankara TRT Television Network 1800 GMT 14 Mar 1997.

<sup>20</sup> Bahcheli, Tozun, and Theodore A. Couloumbis, and Patricia Carley, Eds. Greek-Turkish Relations and U.S. Foreign Policy: Cyprus, the Aegean, and Regional Stability. Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace, 1997. 9.



give a valuable external imprimatur to the democratic process in Turkey.”<sup>22</sup> With Turkey’s democracy buttressed and stronger pro-Western leadership encouraged, real headway could be made both in addressing systemic economic problems economy and in advancing diplomatic efforts to resolve the encumbering Greek-Turkish quarrel.



**Figure 3.6: Atatürk or Islam?** Indicative of growing disenchantment with Turkey’s artificially imposed Western secularism, this Turkish woman wearing traditional chador passes by a statue of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, founder of secular Turkey, in Sultanbeyli near Istanbul. Christian Science Monitor Internat’l Online, Photo AP MURAD SEZER

<sup>23</sup> In addition to shoring up Turkey’s weak democracy and advancing needed reforms, EU membership would firmly anchor Turkey as a key player within the NATO alliance and assure its continued Western societal evolution. The voice of anti-Western Islamists and neo-nationalist in Turkey has grown ever louder over the past few decades. What were once discounted an inconsequential minorities are now a political force that threatens either to increasingly detach Turkey from Europe and NATO or lessen the country’s secular democratic orientation, or perhaps both. For example, one of the leading tactics Islamists have used is to portray Turkey’s hope of one day merging with Europe as an illusion and suggest that Turkey’s true salvation lies

<sup>21</sup> *Turkey Urges EU to Consider its Enlargement*. FBIS Document FTS19970627000445. Paris AFP 1026 GMT 27 Jun 1997.

<sup>22</sup> Lesser, Ian O. *Bridge or Barrier? Turkey and the West after the Cold War*. RAND, Project Air Force, Arroyo Center, 1992.

<sup>23</sup> *Atatürk or Islam?* Christian Science Monitor Online, 27 Jan. 1998. 15 Apr. 1999  
www.csmonitor.com

in an intensification of ties to the Muslim World.<sup>24</sup> When the idea of greater isolation from the West is increasingly resonating amongst the Turkish populace, the EU cannot simply hope that gestures such as the 1996 Customs Union will keep Turkey in the Western fold. Further, when former Islamist Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan talks of the EU as "a club of Christians aimed at reducing Turkey to slavery" and pledges to abolish Turkey's secular constitution, it is a clear forewarning that Turkey's continued affiliation with the West must not be taken for granted.<sup>25</sup> A decisive plan to bring Turkey within the EU, even through a "conditional" membership, would weaken the hand of those who argue for a Turkey more independent from the West, detachment from the West or even worse, some sort of Islamic republic.\* Yet most importantly, a Turkey firmly attached to the West through EU membership and thereby allowed an increasingly vibrant democracy and economy, is a Turkey much more capable of making peace with Greece and stabilizing adjacent territories.

With Turkey and Greece under the EU's umbrella, both would be more accountable and susceptible to the influence of this powerful organization. With both nations having to meet the same financial standards and focusing on meeting a consensus of economic and political goals, Greece and Turkey as EU members would inevitably draw closer together. As the remaining EU members push these old foes to be more flexible on issues of contention, a

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<sup>24</sup> Larrabee, Stephen F. *US and European Policy toward Turkey and the Caspian Basin*. Santa Monica: RAND, 1998. 168-169.

<sup>25</sup> Erbakan Necmettin. European Institute for Research on Mediterranean and Euro-Arab Cooperation Online. 15 Apr 1999 [www.medea.be/en/index048.htm](http://www.medea.be/en/index048.htm)

\* April 1999 elections in Turkey surprisingly marked the ascendance of the National Action Party (MHP) which received 18 percent of the vote. Moving well ahead of the Islamist Virtue Party in sheer number of parliament seats, some might interpret the rise of the nationalist party as a welcome relief from the recent successes of Refah and its offshoot party, Virtue. However, the ultrarightist MHP party advocates a larger Turkish identity and a more independent and assertive foreign policy "in line with Turkey's national interests," as its platform states. Given the resentment many Turks had in regard to persistent human rights lecturing from Europe in regard to the recent arrest of PKK terrorist Abdullah Ocalan, the MHP, with its hard-line anti-PKK stood in the best position to capitalize on this

modus vivendi leading to greater political accord would only be a natural progression.

Capturing the essence of this hope long held among many observers of the Greek-Turkish conflict, Ian Lesser writes:

As NATO moves through a period of uncertainty, the idea that Turkish involvement in the EU could serve to anchor and stabilize Turkish-Greek relations, widely discussed in moderate circles in Athens and Ankara, may gain momentum.<sup>26</sup>

As Lesser suggests, the discipline imposed by the EU parliamentary process would gradually work to bring these old adversaries together. Under the guidance of the EU, as Greece and Turkey relinquish their costly and dangerous hostilities, the entire region would benefit from their blossoming economies and increasingly positive and unified political policies.

### **Objections to Turkey's EU Membership: Mission Impossible?**

Next to this sketchy vision of spawning a Greek-Turkish model of intercultural peace from Europe extending its hand to Turkey with some form of EU membership plan, the impediments to bringing Turkey into the EU appear formidable if not overwhelming. For example, with its huge size and comparatively undeveloped economy, absorbing Turkey arguably could place a horrendous financial strain on the EU's already strained budget. In addition, bringing Turkey into the EU would push EU borders right up to the Middle East and as many EU representatives contend, raise the prospect of their being dragged into the endless conflicts of this volatile region. Furthermore, there is the claim that due to its questionable human rights record and shaky democracy, Turkey does not yet deserve to join ranks with the EU. Also, there is Greece, which has repeatedly asserted that until the Greek-Turkish disputes over Cyprus and other issues are resolved, the EU must not embrace Turkey. Lastly,

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animosity. However, this author believes the MHP's recent success neither marks the permanent decline of Islamist parties nor that MHP offers much better hope of anchoring Turkey to the West.

<sup>26</sup> Lesser 22.

despite all these other objections regarding Turkey's weak economics and democracy, there is more powerful and often unspoken barrier of xenophobia among Europeans, who feel their own cultural identities threatened by the prospect of engulfing this huge Muslim country. First we look at the prospective financial burden of Turkey EU entrance.

As a comparatively vast nation with a vigorous but often wayward economy, taking Turkey within the EU could prove exorbitantly expensive. With a population of over 61 million with half the per capita GDP of the Europe's poorest country, Turkey looks to be a great beneficiary of the EU's numerous economic assistance programs.<sup>27</sup> For example, Turkey's sizable farming sector would require a substantial increase in the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) subsidies, which are already stretching EU budgets. Also, most regions of Turkey would be due to receive assistance from the European Regional Development Fund and with high levels of unemployment and low skill levels among many of its workers, many areas would as well take in European Social Fund grants. Likewise, due to its low level of development, Turkey could claim a significant share of the loans allotted by the European Investment Fund.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, with deep economic problems including an inadequate tax structure, a large and inefficient public sector, high inflation, and extensive foreign and domestic debts, Turkey would undoubtedly need the EU's guiding hand for years following its EU admittance. Presented with all this, would the citizens of EU states be willing to carry this extra burden or pay additional taxes to sustain such generous aid programs—especially to a large Muslim nation such as Turkey? EU representatives are quick to raise questions regarding Turkey's economic weaknesses and in doing so suggest that Turkey is just too big and too undeveloped to absorb now or perhaps at any time.

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<sup>27</sup> Lesser 8.



**Figure 3.7:** US Troops in Gulf War. Middle Eastern Entanglements like the Gulf War only reinforce European reticence to bring Turkey among their ranks. Many EU states fear having their borders extended to Iran and Iraq. Here US troops fire artillery into Kuwait.

If Turkey's volatile economy is not disconcerting enough, EU representatives worriedly speak of how a Turkish EU membership would expand their political borders and drag them into the endless

Middle East conflicts. Although Turkey has acted often under Western auspices, its increasing

involvement in the Middle East in the post-Cold War era has <sup>29</sup>reinforced European reservations about Turkish EU membership. With Turkey's sharing boundaries such perennial hotspots as Syria, Iran and Iraq, Europeans express fears that allowing Turkey in their ranks would entangle the EU in endless distant conflicts. Encapsulating this anxiety among EU members over significantly altering their traditional obligation to Turkey, Stephen Larrabee writes, "A security guarantee against an attack by the Soviet Union is one thing; a guarantee in case of attack by Iran or Syria is quite another."<sup>30</sup> Turkey gained first-hand experience of this tepid European commitment to its defense when Germany dragged its feet responding to Ankara's request for military reinforcement as provided under NATO agreements. Although eighteen German Alpha jets were eventually deployed to Erhac and Diyarbakir as part of NATO's Allied Mobile Force-Air agreements, Turkey gained the

<sup>28</sup> Redmond, John. The Next Mediterranean Enlargement of the European Community: Turkey, Cyprus, or Malta? Birmingham: Dartmouth Publishing Co. Ltd., 1993. 38.

<sup>29</sup> *Photo of US Artillery Troops in Desert Storm*. Encarta Encyclopedia. Microsoft Corporation. CD-ROM. Washington. 1997.

<sup>30</sup> Larrabee 160.

distinct impression that given the option, the EU would prefer to keep Turkey at arms length.<sup>31</sup>

On top of the EU's anxiety over shifting its diplomatic center-of-gravity to the East, Turkey's unstable democracy and questionable human rights record provides added ammunition to Europeans who wish to highlight Turkey's "unwesternness". Thrice since 1960, Turkey's powerful military leadership has seized over the country's reigns when social stability came under threat. More recently in the summer of 1997, Turkey's powerful generals again forced the resignation of Islamist Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan, who had advocated closer relations with Iran and Libya and promoted Islamic practices in Turkey's government and society.<sup>32</sup> Erbakan's actions had angered Turkey's military leadership that has long considered itself the guardian of Atatürk's secular republic. While the legitimacy of Turkey's democracy is made suspect by repeated military interference, accusations of Turkish human rights abuses also raised concerns in the West. For example, since conflict broke out with the Kurds over 13 years ago, some 26,000 Kurds and Turks have been killed and more than 3,000 Kurdish villages in the southeast have been forcibly emptied.<sup>33</sup> Year after year, outside observers such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have documented the use of torture by Turkish security forces.<sup>34</sup> This evidence of state sanctioned brutality added to already questionable legitimacy of Turkey's democracy prove, many argue, that Turkey must first be required to stabilize its democracy and meet certain human rights standards before receiving EU membership.

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<sup>31</sup> Lesser 14.

<sup>32</sup> Omestad, Thomas and Jonathan Ewing. *An Undemocratic 'Democracy.'* U.S. News and World Report. 30 June 1997: v122 n25, 42.

<sup>33</sup> *Turkey's Place in Europe: The doubt should be less about Islam than the government's treatment of dissidents, especially Kurds.* Editorial. The Economist. 11Oct 1997: v344, 19-21.

If Turkey's fickle economy, suspect democracy, and human rights abuses were not enough, Europe can always count on Greece to provide a ready excuse for the EU's resistance to Turkey's EU entry. Since its admission into the EU in 1981, Greece has made it an integral part of its foreign policy to gain EU sympathy in their disputes with Turkey. Doing so, Greece has succeeded in making the settlement of its conflict with Turkey over Cyprus a prerequisite to any effort to bring the EU and Turkey closer together. In response, Turkey has denounced the EU as having surrendered its neutrality and allowing itself to become a mere extension of Greece's obsessive anti-Turkish diplomacy. Repeatedly using their veto as an EU member, Greece has thwarted virtually every EU decision that could possibly benefit Turkey and has constantly used its EU bully pulpit to illuminate Turkey's "illegal" military occupation of Northern Cyprus.<sup>35</sup> Although Greece has publicly affirmed Turkey's "Europeanness," they jealously retain their EU veto card as their best instruments to prevail in this ongoing Aegean argument.

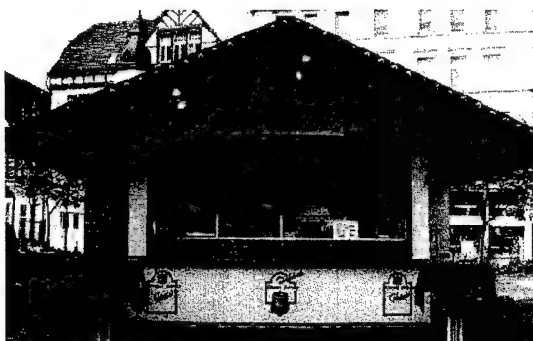
Yet despite all these legitimate questions as to Turkey's "EU worthiness," arguably the greatest impediment is European cultural and religious bigotry. Behind all the plethora of concerns European states are forever bandying about, lies the hidden "civilization" issue. As Dutch Foreign Minister Hans Van Mierlo boldly declared in 1997, "There is a problem of a large Muslim state. Do we want that in Europe? It is an unspoken question."<sup>36</sup> Greece's contest with Turkey and all these other issues are *not* the real barriers to Turkey's membership in the EU, but often pretexts for much deeper reservations. As has already

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<sup>34</sup> Salinsky, Mary. *Torture Continues in Turkey: Findings of New Report*. The Lancet 5 Dec. 1998: 185.

<sup>27</sup> Dimitri Conostas and Theofanis G. Stavrou Eds. *Greece Prepares for the Twenty-first Century*. Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1995. 78.

<sup>36</sup> Larrabee 160.



**Figure 3.4:** Shaping a Multicultural European Identity? Above is a Turkish Döner Kebab stand in Lippstadt, Germany. Turks in Germany have opened up thousands of such tiny restaurants, which have come to symbolize their cultural presence in Germany. Photo from Döner Kebab House Online.

<sup>37</sup>become evident in Germany's struggle to deal with the over two million Turkish migrant workers living there, European nations continue to struggle with transformation of their own race-based identities, both at the national and continental level. As many Germans have recoiled at the prospect of assimilating two million of Turkish "guest workers"\* within their own country, the likelihood of opening up the

whole of Europe to a tidal wave of 60 million more Turks is even more disconcerting. \*\* In fact, all the other legitimate concerns Europeans hold can and should be overcome; rather, it is persistent prejudice that offers the most insidious barrier to Turkey's EU membership and in turn threatens Europe's future stability.

### **Overcoming Objections to Turkey's EU Membership: Facing Hidden Fears**

Although the arguments many European politicians offer against Turkey's EU membership do have merit, they do not present any hurdles that cannot or should not be overcome. For instance, although the Turkish economy does have serious structural problems and its absorption into the EU would undoubtedly be costly, Turkey most likely

<sup>37</sup> Photo of Turkish Döner Kebab Restaurant in Germany. Döner Kebab House Online. 12 Apr. 1999 [www.lamm.net.htm](http://www.lamm.net.htm)

\* "Gastarbeiter" or "guest workers" were brought to Germany under contracts negotiated with many nations to meet Germany's post-WWII labor needs. Turkey became the largest provider of these supposedly temporary laborers coming to Germany. Many Turks remained in Germany and brought their families from Turkey to join them. When the German post-War "economic miracle" began to wane, these ethnic guest workers began to be resented and even later offered monetary rewards if they would leave. Today, friction continues as Germany struggles to reconstruct its sense of what it means



would agree to lessen this financial shock by assuming their EU rights and benefits in increments, even as perhaps certain economic criteria were met. In addition, expressed fears that Turkey's joining the EU would drag Europe into Middle Eastern conflicts are misguided since, in reality, Europe is already on its on behalf heavily involved in the Middle East region and beyond. Likewise, while it is true that Turkey's democracy and human rights record are shaky, it is also to Europe's benefit to offer Turkey EU membership as the best means of rapidly improving both of these weaknesses. Furthermore, Greece's obstruction of Turkey's EU participation could be diminished if not removed by reassuring Greece that a Turkey within the EU would be a Turkey most capable of accommodating a desired settlement on Cyprus and related issues. Lastly and most importantly, Europe must confront its hidden cultural intolerance, as this is the root cause of the very regional instability that Europe hopes to conquer. Overall, when the pros and cons of each of these seemingly insuperable obstacles to Turkey's EU membership are examined, it become evident that Turkey's entrance to the EU in reality best serves Europe's economic, diplomatic and strategic interests.

Turkish leaders understand EU member concerns about the possible financial, cultural, and political impact of trying to swallow their sizable country and would by all indications be open to negotiating some phased entrance to ease this shock. One must remember that the greatest incentive EU acceptance provides Turkey, even above political advice and monetary assistance, is of a symbolic nature. Although EU financial assistance and political guidance is sorely needed, it the consummation of Turkey's Western occupation above all else makes EU membership its own reward. However, the various financial subsidies that Turkey would qualify for as an EU member also could be negotiated and modified such that they would not

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to be "German." After years of conflict, there are today some positive signs that the over 2 million Turkish immigrants living in Germany may finally be granted a less restrictive path to full citizenship.

put unbearable strain on EU budgets. In addition, rights that Turkey stands to gain as a new EU member, such as the right of its citizens to migrate anywhere in the EU or its right to a certain number of EU parliamentary seats based on population—all such matters could be deferred to mitigate their impact. All of the many objections including Turkey's size, human rights record, disputes with Greece, among others could be a part of a staggered plan to absorb Turkey fully as an EU member. Granting Turkey a conditional although ultimately "full" EU membership would likely suffice so long as endless obstacles to their final integration were not fabricated. In fact, one of the strongest virtues of Europe taking a step of faith and offering Turkey some phased EU entrance, are the incentives for a myriad of reforms such a process would allow. The crucial point however, is that by reaching out to Turkey, the EU has the power to create a powerful and positive dynamic, as was the case with Greece, combining its political and economic might with the energy within Turkey's yearning for European acceptance.

As another argument, EU members contend that Turkey's EU membership would lead to their entanglement in the endless instabilities of the Middle East and Central Asia. Such concerns however, are overstated. Being that Europe is already heavily involved well outside its traditional boundaries, such isolationist objections seem mindless. In today's post-Cold War world, which is both increasingly interconnected economically and prone to provincial instabilities, Europe simply cannot remain passive and hope to preserve its political-economic well being. The reality is that European is already being forced to become active beyond its old Cold War defense perimeter. With continued dependence on oil and gas supplies in North Africa as well as the Middle East, the prosperity of the EU today more so than ever is influenced from afar. Closer to home also, the series of conflicts in the former Yugoslavia,

southern Russia and Central Asia have all touched upon Europe's security interests. In addition, protracted hostilities in Kosovo today threaten to broaden into a much wider war and could even lead to the dissolution of NATO. These events only serve notice that Europe cannot keep its head in the sand, but must be more pro-active to safeguard its ever-broadening geo-political interests. One crucial step toward this end is for Europe to extend its considerable political-economic influence and to bring Turkey within the EU—arguably the essential precursor to this thesis' concept of changing Greece and Turkey from foes into pillars of regional stability.

Although Europeans also point nervously to Turkey's shaky democracy and questionable human rights record as to why it should be excluded from the EU, in reality, ostracizing and isolating Turkey will only work against Europe's greater welfare. It is to Europe's overall strategic benefit to help Turkey overcome such weaknesses, which can most effectively be accomplished through their full EU participation. As has already been detailed, Turkey's fractured political scene has reached paralysis. No one party or leader has the political capital to push through the variety of needed, although painstaking reforms. EU membership is just the powerful incentive that Turkey's secular democrats lack in their effort to help break their country out of its governmental deadlock. As has been the case in the West's dealing with China, Russia, and some would argue even Cuba, economic openness and added growing dialogue only increase the likelihood of democratic and better human rights enforcement. This is doubly true being that Turkey is not a traditional foe of the West, but one of its more reliable and strategic allies.

Additionally, while it is true Greece still wields its veto toward any Turkish EU inroads, as a means of bludgeoning Turkey into bending on a variety of disputed issues; this tactic has

proven a failure. If anything, as a result of Greece pressure tactics and obstruction of Turkey's EU participation, Turkey is more resolute than ever toward the Cyprus imbroglio and other matters of contention. Despite Greece's love affair with its EU veto, it has begun showing signs that it recognizes that a Turkey within, rather than without the EU, is in fact its best hope of achieving its diplomatic goals. As Greek Foreign Minister Pangalos restated his government's public position in March of 1997, "Greece's political and economic interests would be more easily served by a Turkey in the EU than a Turkey outside it."<sup>38</sup> This willingness to state the obvious offers great hope that Greece might agree to stop obstructing Turkey's entrance into the EU, in exchange for assurances of Turkey's future flexibility on issues Greece holds dear—Cyprus in particular.

Whereas European hesitancy to assume the burden of helping Turkey's address its economic and political frailties is understandable, yet not insurmountable—the deeper problem of European ethno-religious prejudice is in reality the greatest obstruction to Turkey's EU membership. Addressing these long-hidden psychological fears will be the greatest challenge and thus far few have dared make it a central issue. Yet, the constant US pressure on the European states to bring Turkey into the EU fold is keeping this issue in the public forum. Furthermore, the ongoing debate in Germany over their large Turkish population as well as similar immigrant debates across Europe offer hope that old racial hatreds are beginning to be subdued. However, although momentum is growing toward taking limited measures to better the situation of minority groups in Europe, greater urgency is required. The ethno-religious strife in Kosovo only reinforces this need for a dramatic policy shift away from status quo Western approaches, which have focused on reactive and

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<sup>38</sup> Korop, Marcia Christoff. *Greece and Turkey: Can They Mend Fences?* Foreign Affairs Jan/Feb 1998. 7-12.

interim solutions such as Dayton Accord ethnic partitions. Considering the enormous cost that NATO countries are incurring in their effort to achieve some positive conclusion to the Kosovo crisis, one must ask whether this considerable energy might be better directed elsewhere. Bringing Turkey into the EU is an action that arguably would lead to a cascade of other positive events, one of which should be a Greek-Turkish détente. Such an inter-cultural accord is precisely the lasting archetype of stability that Europe and regions surrounding desperately need.

In sum, confronted with the threat of continued regional instability caused by the reemergence of old cultural cleavages, the EU must use its economic might to reshape the Greek-Turkish feud into a new model of inter-cultural harmony. While this stubborn conflict may appear irresolvable, the power of the global economy funneled through the EU offers hope of an eventual accord between Greece and Turkey. As the EU has already done in Greece, Turkey stands ready to respond to the incentive of finally culminating its Western aspirations—specifically through the embrace of EU membership. A stronger, more democratic and Western-leaning Turkey is a Turkey that can make peace with Greece. Therefore Greek-Turkish reconciliation under the EU umbrella offers the best hope of resolving this old inter-cultural quarrel. It is true that there are many apparently large obstacles to bringing Turkey within the EU. Turkey's strong but erratic economy, its questionably stable democracy, its human rights abuses, its enormous population, among other issues make this large Muslim country seem too big for Europe to assimilate. Yet, surprisingly all of these issues can and must be surmounted. Instead, the real obstacles to Turkey merger into the EU exist largely in the European psyche. Developing a new perspective on how different cultures can co-exist is all part and parcel of why some new

exemplar of inter-civilizational accord must be established. Therefore, the EU must overcome its own fears and safeguard its future prosperity by using its economic clout to help Greece and Turkey stop wasting their tremendous promise in their enduring dispute and instead help them become powerful twin pillars of regional stability.

## Conclusion

As part of an overall need to rethink post-Cold War foreign policies, NATO allies should reassess both their handling and the significance of the interminable Greek-Turkish dispute. While Europe and the US have struggled to contain a series of renewed old ethno-religious conflicts, the value of resolving the seminal inter-cultural struggle between Greeks and Turks has significantly increased. Indeed, at a time when there are few examples of harmony between the East and the West, Christian and Muslim—Greece and Turkey offer the West the opportunity to establish just such an exemplar. The crucial catalyst required to transform these two old foes into this notional archetype for stability is the combined political and economic might of the European Union (EU). As history has shown, new eras often have brought with them fresh dilemmas, which in turn have required bold diplomatic responses. Presently, the world is also well beyond the threshold of this new post-Cold War era. To meet the challenges of this modern age and safeguard their global security interests into the next century—Europe its allies should turn their energies toward founding new examples of intercultural peace—beginning with these two old Aegean foes.

Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Western allies have failed to find some means of suppressing an alarming resurgence of old ethnic and religious hatreds. In accordance with Samuel Huntington's prophecy, the world today from the Balkans to Central Asia has become one marked by what he aptly labeled the "clash of civilizations." In the absence of the controlling hand of the Soviet Union, newly liberated republics have again taken up the pursuit of ethno-religious identities and in doing so, reopened many old wounds. While these recently regenerated cultural cleavages from the Balkans to Southern Russia have drawn much attention from the West, the Greek-Turkish conflict, which has simmered far longer,

continued to be overlooked. This old Aegean argument however, located at the crux of the former Byzantine and Ottoman Empires, is the historical wellspring to many of the conflicts today raging across Europe's periphery. Although NATO and the UN point to the 1995 Dayton Accord with its ethnic partitions and related peacekeeping efforts as success, in reality these "successes" are at best only interim solutions. Although endeavoring to end senseless bloodshed is noble, if not imperative, the West must also work to dissuade future conflicts by establishing new models of intercultural harmony. Offering this promise, Greece and Turkey are now uniquely positioned to steady a region extending from the former Yugoslavia to the Caspian Sea and should become the first of perhaps several potential archetypes of cross-civilizational harmony.

With budding economies and far-reaching cultural ties, Greece and Turkey with the help of a powerful external hand could help stabilize a vast and currently volatile area. Greece for instance, has stepped away from socialist legacy and recently, with the help of its EU mentor, has made remarkable progress implementing economic reforms. Also, with cultural ties to its "Orthodox brethren" across the Balkans, Greece should be serving the NATO alliance by fomenting liberalizing reforms and in general, helping ground budding democracies in the region. Turkey likewise is a slumbering economic giant, that were it not for its fractured democracy, would likely be furthering Western interests a powerful regional presence, uniquely suited to guide newly independent Central Asian republics. With its latent industrial and agricultural might, its unique combination of Islam and secular democracy, Turkey's importance to the West only continues to grow. Tragically however, the tremendous promise both Greece and Turkey offer the West is to a large extent, currently lost within their enduring feud.



The EU is the key to transforming the wasted energy and resources of the Greek-Turkish conflict into a cross-cultural alliance that would provide greater stability to a vast region. Greece and Turkey have reached a point where the EU's influence can help effect real and much needed change. Both countries have made considerable economic and political progress on their own; however, today each stands in need of a powerful outside benefactor to help them reach the next level of economic and political reforms. As a case in point, Greece has at last moved away from the ideological gridlock of the post-Andreas Papandreou era and now is aggressively moving toward greater financial unity with the EU. As a result Greece's desire to merge its economy with the EU's, it has succeeded in trimming bloated central budgets, cutting inflation, increasing growth rates, and making its financial institutions more efficient across the board. Turkey on the other hand, stymied by a fractious democracy, lacks the ability to push through tough reform measures. Yet, if the EU were to reach out to Turkey with a plan for full EU membership, the effects would likely be very positive. Yearning for decades to fulfill its Western vocation, the embrace of the EU is just the "carrot" Turkey needs to make a breakthrough, arguably even greater the one Greece is currently making. With the EU as its "big brother," Turkey could strengthen its shaky democracy, restrain the rising voice of Islamic fundamentalism, and release its enormous economic potential. In concept, all of this would produce a Turkey capable and more willing to reach a settlement with Greece on their many points of contention.

This simple and somewhat vague plan may seem a little fanciful; yet, as history has demonstrated, new eras have repeatedly been defined by innovations in industry, technology, military tactics, and even in diplomacy, all of which went against the status quo. It is this writer's contention that the post-Cold War era likewise demands such bold and idealistic

approaches, especially given the scant evidence that current stratagems aimed at controlling the recent intercultural conflicts are succeeding. Just as in the post-WWII for example, when it took the US and its allies years to sort out their “containment” strategy against International Communism, so the Western powers are today, groping for some means of suppressing endless regional conflicts. Today, when there are few large-scale examples of inter-ethnic and inter-religious harmony, Greece and Turkey offer the West an opportunity to create a powerful new mold. What is the alternative? The alternative is that Europe and other Western powers could continue to expend their finite resources in failed attempts to quell endless cross-civilizational conflicts and still end up confronting a much broader war. With all the energy and resources the West is spending in attempts to bring peace to the former Yugoslavia, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and Northern Ireland among a litany of others, it is now time it focused the less renowned, but equally as important if not more promising Greek-Turkish dispute.

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